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Conscription and the Marginalization of Military Values in Modern Israeli Society (1982 - 2010)

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An abstract of
A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Middle Eastern Studies

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Abstract

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This paper discusses the shift of the Israeli value system beginning in the 1980s from Israel's founding values of militarism and security toward a more liberal approach to citizenship and success. This research traces the historical role of conscription in defining oneself and one's obligation as an Israeli citizen and examines the changes in social composition of the military, especially the elite ranks. It recognizes the decline in centrality of the Israeli Defense Forces in Israeli society, citing economic development, globalization, and the political development of a tenable peace process as factors that enabled Israel to enter a new era of demilitarization. Such factors also allowed for a consolidated military protest movement to emerge during the First Lebanon War. As this military evasion movement has grown and unified over the past three decades it has aligned with a liberal individualistic discourse that has become increasingly incompatible with the military collective values of Israel's majority. The Israeli Defense Forces and broader Israeli society have only in the past decade begun to acknowledge the impending threat of military evasion and the challenge posed by those who wish to reform Israel's military-determined hierarchy. This paper presents the Israel Defense Forces' initial response to its decline in stature, noting that it is but the beginning of a crucial transformation within Israeli society likely to give rise to an inevitable clash of ideologies in the future. This research integrates both the founding values of a society born into perpetual conflict and the effects of modernization and globalization to analyze the resulting discord.

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Introduction

Natan is a soldier in the Israeli army. He wakes up in the morning, dons his combat-insignia-clad uniform and rides the bus for free, coddled in admiration of his peers. In reality, Natan sacrifices everything for his country, but in his combat regalia he feels like the victor, for "the military has mythological status among many Israelis"[1] and Natan is but one of many *kravi* (combat) Hercules in his mandatory service. No matter how he chooses to continue his life, he has already earned his pat on the back and is left with a lifetime of preferential treatment, emotional baggage, and a conception of *normal* that would not pass for healthy in other parts of the world.

This could have been Natan's reality, up until the recent unraveling of Israel's societal values, whereby the collective good no longer transcends the individual and there are alternative paths to success besides those dictated by military tradition.

Political scientists describe this phenomenon of shifting values as Israel's transition from Zionism to Post-Zionism,[2] giving rise to a more liberal definition of nationalism that is critical of Israel's traditional military-oriented society. The economic liberalization and appearance of a tenable political solution for peace, beginning in the 1980s, allowed for a new framework to permeate the Israeli way of life in which military standing was no longer the sole manifestation of one's commitment to the country and main path to upward mobility. This new framework disrupted the military's

institutionalization within civil society, something that had prevailed since Israel's conception out of the pressing need for security and self-preservation. This demilitarization and loss of prestige is felt most by graduated combat soldiers who suffered the highest losses, as the social clout they previously received for their risks began to diminish. This loss can also be measured in the demographic and compositional changes in the military. Whereas in Israel's first few decades the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) was considered so all-encompassing of society that one's citizenship was determined by one's service, the military's ranks, especially the combat units and officer corps, have become more partially-representative of society and the legitimization of not serving have ushered in a new discourse that cannot co-exist with the way things were. The new discourse reflected both institutional government driven economic liberalization and grassroots social liberalization of the individual's motivation to serve or more appropriately not to serve. The mobilization of individuals toward this liberal framework is now taking root in Israeli society, but it has yet to be determined whether these changes will become permanent, as the republican framework of military hegemony struggles to regain the power it has lost. As the two frameworks become increasingly incompatible, Israeli society comes closer to a point of ideological discord from which there will be no turning back.

The first chapter "Ramifications of War and its Psychological Impact" sets the scene for how personality development and psychological health have been affected by war in the first stage of Israeli development, where the needs of the military were set above all others. It displays the extent to which military values were ingrained in the individual's perception of "Israeli." The severity of sacrifice that was embedded in the

Israeli identity was both critiqued by liberal protest of military values, and conversely made it more difficult for individuals to internalize the new liberal preferences because of their entrenched, almost sub-conscious attachment to the military. In order for liberalization to take root in Israeli society as a whole, a rupture must occur between what was and what will be, with the old displaced by the new.

The second chapter "The Israeli Military: A Wide Cross-section of Citizens" outlines the parameters for service in Israel, including who serves, how they serve, and how serving in the IDF has been a tool for establishing social cohesion and defining one's citizenship. This chapter also discusses the shifts in the socio-ethnic composition of the military, which reflect political transformations like the emergence of a military protest movement, and portray the first shift of some of Israel's majority groups away from the military. The third chapter "Impact of Economic Development and Globalization" examines the sources for the shift in Israeli society's framework from one of traditional security values toward a more broad-minded, liberal framework less demanding of conformity. This ideological reformation was rooted in the political developments of the peace process and the economic embrace of globalization and modernization. The last chapter "Government Initiatives to Enhance IDF Recruitment and Prestige" examines the IDF's very recent responses to its societal demotion, and their short-term success in boosting recruitment but not necessarily prestige. In the last two decades a substantial minority has organized collective action toward liberalizing Israeli society, acting out of an attraction to the personal incentives offered by liberalism, as well as an ideological opposition to the moral hierarchy in Israel, which they feel subjugates the Palestinians and demands an excess of militarism from its citizens. Whether

liberalization as a social movement will displace military hegemony as a dominant framework in Israeli society demands further research that traces the mobilization of Israeli society toward one ideology versus the other as it unfolds.

Review of the Literature

The changing value system in Israel since the 1980s and its profound effect on the military ethos that has pervaded the country's socio-economic structure since its founding is currently the subject of intense public and political debate. While academics have been noting such a value shift for the past two decades, the reality of Israel's reconstruction is something that has only recently been recognized by the broader Israeli public and the IDF especially, making the responses of the government and IDF to the perceived decline in militarism a very exciting and contemporary topic.

When I first began to research the military ethos of Israeli society/culture, (sometimes referred to as the Israeli military society because of the organization of a large portion of Israeli society around the military's needs), I was interested in the ramifications of perpetual conflict on the development of both Israeli society and the Israeli individual. This led me to focus on two main fields of research – the political science and sociological assessments of highly integrated civil-military relations in Israel and the sacrifices of the individual for the collective betterment of the country, especially long-term psychological sacrifices. While there is ample research available about civil-military relations and the military's institutional modes of control and about the military ethos of prestige, there is less public dialogue about the psychological ramifications of military motivation on the individual, an under-researched topic that may have been considered too controversial and harder to measure within the broader field of Israel

studies.

The psychological model for examining the contribution of individuals to Israeli society is best exemplified by Amia Lieblich in her 1978 book *Tin Soldiers on Jerusalem Beach: An Israeli Psychologist's Account of the Inner Lives of Her Compatriots.* The personal accounts of the habitual effects of war were poignant, stirring, and revealing. They presented an Israeli reality that had until the end of the twentieth century been purposefully avoided and considered taboo. Also contributing to the analysis of the Israeli individual was Orna Sasson Levy's 2005 work on the gender-relations and the excess demand for masculinity in early Israeli society.

Israeli studies have often overlapped with Israeli military studies because of the pervasive culture of "a nation in arms."[3] Thus, extensive research was done by scholars like Baruch Kimmerling, Uri-Ben Eliezer, Yoram Peri, Reuven Gal, Moshe Lissak, and Daniel Maman on the formation of the state of Israel and Israeli culture, politics, and society. Many of these scholars write from a politically left of center point of view, in which they are critical of the command the IDF has exerted over Israeli society, in their opinion challenging Israel's democratic ideals. To scholars on the political right, it seemed unnecessary to broach the subject of civil-military relations, as they were more content with the status quo and hesitant to affect change which could 'weaken' Israel.

Most of this research was published prior to the mid-1980s. When Israeli modernization and globalization ushered in ideological liberalism, a new generation of scholars including Stuart Cohen, Yagil Levy, Edna Lomsky-Feder, Shlomo Reznik, Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled began to map the shift in society away from Israel's founding Republican discourse of Zionism that permitted hegemonic militarism. This

new generation of scholars of the Israeli military culture were overall more critical than their predecessors and seemed very much engulfed in the liberalization they wrote of. They tended to view Israel's modernization as an isolated phenomenon, which they promoted. They wrote of the rise of a liberal subculture within Israel without examining explicitly how this new discourse was incorporated into Israeli society as a whole. My research attempts to examine the Israeli system, reconciling the parallel developments of Israeli liberalization and a continued attachment to traditional values.

The articles of the post-1980s scholars provided the theoretical framework and historical context for my research. Gershon and Shafir's comprehensive book, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, provided a sound historical narrative of Israeli military events, political transformations, and the impact of immigration waves. Yagil Levy and Edna Lomsky-Feder's article "From 'Obligatory Militarism' to 'Contractual Militarism' – Competing Models of Citizenship" was pivotal in addressing the changing nature of military prestige and how that altered one's conception of what it meant to be Israeli. Stuart Cohen's research in "A Portrait of the New Israeli Soldier," was especially enlightening, discussing how new societal focuses changed the military experience of an individual. Yagil Levy's "How the Military's Social Composition Affects Political Protest" was vital for tracing the societal transformations, such as the emergence of a military refusal movement, which constructed a liberal discourse with real staying power. Yulia Zemlinkskaya's interviews with conscientious objectors from the four major movements in "Between Militarism and Pacifism: Conscientious Objection and Draft Resistance in Israel" helped establish how this liberal discourse has

been adopted and adjusted over the past fifty years, becoming increasingly incompatible with traditional Israeli values.

Finally, because the nature of my research is extremely contemporary, I relied upon major Israeli newspapers, mostly articles published in English, ranging from the liberal *Haaretz*, to the conservative *Jerusalem Post*, to the politically neutral *Yedioth Ahronoth*, to the religious *Arutz Sheva,* in order to include the most up-to-date trends and news. In order to understand the extent to which the ideological trends evidenced in my research are visible within contemporary Israeli society, during the summer of 2008 I was able to conduct research at Hebrew University, including conducting several personal interviews, thanks to the generosity of a grant from the Institute for the Study of Modern Israel at Emory University. This research is only the beginning exploration of what is likely to be a long and intense discourse that has the power to change Israeli society forever.

I. Ramifications of War and its Psychological Impact

Israel is commonly described as a country born in the crucible of war. Former chief Psychologist of the IDF Reuven Gal notes the intrinsic role of the IDF in Israeli society since the country's first moments. "The IDF was born into the battlefield" during the War of Independence. "This has made it, from its first moment, a fighting army."[4] This survival instinct was one with which the Jewish pioneers who established the country of Israel were familiar, having lived as isolated minorities in Western Europe, endured European pogroms, and survived the Holocaust. Many of those who were in Israel prior to the War of Independence fought as part of the Jewish Legion of the British Army, battling the Ottoman Empire in 1914.[5] This proclivity toward organization and survival matured into well-structured Israeli Defense Forces and the security ideology that consumed Israel in its early years. Israel has not experienced a single decade free of full-fledged war,[6] and has been characterized by its persistent state of low-intensity conflict[7] in which, in between the wars, Israel is occupied with general peace keeping and fighting off terrorism. Political scientist Dan Horowitz corroborates the extent of war in Israel: "Since the Second World War, in fact, Israel has been involved in more wars than any other country."[8]

The unyielding presence of conflict during the crucial years of Israel's formation led to the "routinization" of conflict as a permanent condition and of the mechanisms that dealt with this conflict as the most important institutions in Israeli society.[9] This led to a militaristically determined social hierarchy, in which families boast about the elite units in which their children serve, certain bars are restricted to certain military classes, and losing a child to terrorism or war makes you not only a hero, but an authentic Israeli.

Cheryl Mandel, an immigrant from Canada living in the West Bank settlement of Alon Shvut, said in a memorial video for her son, a combat officer killed in Nablus in 2003, "Daniel was the one who made me into a real Israeli mother…Even though Daniel was my third child, the first army ceremony I attended was Daniel's swearing in. Now Daniel was the one who made us part of the bereaved families. We are no longer new immigrants. With Daniel's blood we have become true Israelis."[10]

Service in the IDF involves a high likelihood of combat, severe stress, and very high responsibility, according to Gal. One implication this has for Israeli youth is that "they embody a maturity and seriousness to a degree not seen in most other Western Cultures."[11] Their maturation is condensed, as Gal puts it. This maturation is often intermixed with demands for heroism and masculinity. Two cultural identifications, that of the *sabra* and that of the *kibbutznik,* exemplify these character demands. A *sabra* is a "prickly pear" or cactus fruit with spiky needles on the outside and the sweet meat of the fruit on the inside. This metaphorically refers to the first generation of Israeli pioneers who were known for their tough, gruff exteriors but were compassionate on the inside. The second term, *Kibbutznik* indicates a more physical than emotional vigor, as it describes the settlers who built their own communities and participated heavily in the agricultural sector. Their attachment to the land reinforced their willingness to make sacrifices in order to sustain the state of Israel. The requirement for masculine strength, both inner and outer, in Israeli society is only intensified by the physical and emotional stresses of military endeavors.

A surplus of masculine traits are evident in both Israeli males and females, according to psychologist Amia Lieblich, though military service is longer and more

demanding for men.[12] Accordingly, higher command positions are commonly reserved for men, and when females are placed in these positions of authority, they tend to lose touch with aspects of their femininity. Sociologist Orna Sasson Levy's research describes female attempts to adopt male characteristics, as they would "mimic male body language, tough posturing, sexual obscenities, and misogynous attitudes."[13] This symbol of the masculine warrior is reinforced by the context of protracted conflict, according to sociologist Eyal Ben-Ari. In his view, these ideals are not natural psychological traits, but learned through high cultural demands.[14] In the view of Sasson-Levy, the ideal Jewish combat soldier possesses "hegemonic masculinity," which is also "the emblem of good citizenship" in Israel.

Sasson-Levy outlines how the structure of Israeli society puts those who give the most of themselves to the military at the top. She explains, "This identity assumes a central role in shaping a hierarchal order of gendered and civic identities that reflects and reproduces a social stratification and reconstructs differential modes of participation in, and belonging to, the Israeli state."[15]

One of the greatest demands of this masculinity is the suppression of emotions that is expected and characteristic of the Israeli hero. Amia Lieblich discusses this at length in her psychological analysis of the sacrifices of the Israeli individual for war in *Tin Soldiers on Jerusalem Beach*. Her relevantly titled chapter "When Cannons Are Stilled, Let Voices Be Heard," begins the discussion. Lieblich writes that, "Society must be interested in the sanity of its members, so that they, in turn, will be able to contribute more to it," but observes that this is frequently forgotten or neglected in Israeli reality. Army psychologists in Israel advocate that, "a certain indifference [to emotion] is

'functional' for a soldier," while army commanders request better training for soldiers on how to disassociate one's feelings.[16] Two Hebrew words, *machuk* and *sarut,* meaning respectively "erased" and the superlative "scratched out," describe those who cannot cross back completely into their civilian roles after experiencing trauma. Ex-soldier Kfir expressed how widespread the use of military slang is in daily vernacular and how he judges someone who isn't familiar with the terms as having not served in a combat unit.[17] Lieblich described the use of military slang within civil society as developing terms to fit the unique Israeli reality. The selective word choice of military-related terms is exemplified in the way Israelis refer to people who were killed in war. They are depicted as people who "fell" or as "the fallen," a phrase that has become sacred and conveys heroism without overtly acknowledging death.[18]

When Lieblich published her work in 1978, there existed a social taboo around the discussion of the extent of sacrifice that Israeli soldiers were expected to endure silently. Israel's existence as a country was not yet solidified, especially in the minds of Israel's neighbors, and there was common sentiment that *if we do not defend ourselves, who will?* Moshe Dayan said at the eulogy of a fallen soldier in May 1956, "This is the destiny of our generation. The only choice we have is to be armed, strong and resolute." It felt counterintuitive to brood over the self-sacrifice of the soldier when there was no alternative, so such topics become off-limits for discussion. "Israelis have a very special attachment to the State of Israel, an attachment formed by Jewish history and reinforced by war. Like all other attachments, it may become burdensome and oppressive, and in Israeli society, it is one of the unutterable subjects," says Lieblich.

Lieblich approached this unutterable subject asking a very valuable question: while the functional indifference she witnessed in her therapy groups prepared soldier-citizens for the next war, Lieblich asks if it produces sound citizens between the wars. Lieblich symbolically inquires about the repercussions of Israeli individuals' tremendous sacrifices for the military, referring to the tin soldiers of her book title: "Tin soldiers are here for good. Made of tin, they are permanent and functional. They never die. They certainly do not feel. Do they exist? And what is inside them?"[19]

Lieblich's interviewees describe their inability to return to their former lives after war experiences. One woman, Miri, describes the loss of her husband to war, not in the sense of his death, but in his inability to open up to her upon returning from the 1973 war and their resulting divorce. He came home a stranger, according to Miri. Another interviewee, Zoe, experiences a horrendous battle in which his tank is directly hit and he miraculously escapes physically unharmed but shell-shocked. He painfully reveals the guilt and shame he has for having emotionally broken-down: "I would have felt better if I were wounded…It would have been so much easier. I'd be safe in the hospital, taken care of. Everybody could understand what had happened to me, they wouldn't ask me all these questions," Zoe begins. "I wouldn't be the weakling, the failure, the misfit, the crazy impotent….If I'd have broken my arm instead of falling apart, shell-shocked…"[20] The case of Miri's husband returning a stranger and Zoe preferring a worse reality than his own portray the extreme burden of being an Israeli hero.

"We do not know how to express grief. We feel threatened by weakness, dependence, or vulnerability. We believe that it is wrong even to think about ourselves; it is, somehow, egoistic," said Lieblich of her therapy group. The first few generations born

in Israel were consumed with this devotional rhetoric that cannot coincide with modern liberal discourse, which views such sacrifice as outlandish and excessive. While the majority the Israel still invokes this security-dominated framework, the rapid spread of an incompatible alternative is sweeping through Israeli society.

The relationship between the Israeli identity and militarism was highly intertwined in Israel's formative years, as seen in the self-inflicted demands an individual to be both physically and emotionally invincible as a soldier and citizen. The deeply entrenched nature of militarism in the Israeli individual is something that the liberal social movement that begin in the 1980s balks at, avidly seeking to reverse what appear as intrinsic Israeli characteristics. Conversely, the deeply rooted attachment of Israelis to what Sasson-Levy and Gal Levy call Israel's "militaristic metacode" makes it extremely difficult for a new social movement to implant itself within the majority of Israelis. With this Sasson-Levy and Gal Levy advocate that "a revival of militarized education in constructing belligerency and warfare as a normal across society" will occur before liberalization can find a way to redefine the Israeli personality.[21]

II. The Israeli Military: A Wide Cross-section of Citizens

A. Those Who Serve

The Israeli military is one of ten armies throughout the world that drafts women as well as men, a tradition upheld since its War of Independence in 1948. Unlike other countries in which women are drafted - Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Malaysia, China, North Korea, Eritrea, Taiwan, and Peru – the vast majority of IDF positions, 83 percent, are available to women, including voluntary combat positions.[22] Only about two percent of women actually serve as combat fighters, but the IDF has hopes to increase this.[23]

The IDF is made up of two main bodies, the regular personnel, including conscripts and professional soldiers, and the reserves. In 2009, the regular personnel consisted of 176,500 soldiers and the reserves consisted of 445,000 soldiers, a total capacity of 621,500 soldiers. With a population of 7,200,000 people, about 12 percent of the nation was involved in the military in 2009.[24]

Mahal2000, an organization that helps accommodate foreigners who volunteer to serve in the IDF, extols the IDF on the grounds that its soldiers represent virtually all sectors of society and states that the Israeli army can best be described by its contrasts: an array of soldiers that include religious and secular Jews, Kibbutz members and settlers, Druze of the North and Bedouin of the South, immigrants and volunteers from abroad "from all walks of life."[25] It is precisely these contrasts that have diminished in the IDF from the 1980s forward. As alternative value systems emerge in Israeli society, military service is becoming a stepping-stone for particular groups in society, while having lost some of its mainstream appeal.

Various groups are legally precluded from service. The *Tal Law* implemented in 2002 outlines the rules of exemption for ultra-Orthodox Jews, stating that they need not serve while pursuing religious studies, but the IDF is currently trying to ignite the motivation of the ultra-Orthodox populace to serve. (See section: Making Combat Kosher: Successful Enlistment of Israel's Most Religious). The service rates of ultra-Orthodox Jews continue to fluctuate, but they remain one of the largest groups to be exempted. According to the US Department of State's *2005 International Religious Freedom Report 2005,* approximately nine percent of all male recruits were exempted to be full-time yeshiva (religious school) students.[26]

Another major group for whom military service is not required are the Israeli Arabs. A very small percentage of them volunteer to serve in the IDF. By contrast, other minorities residing in Israel, e.g., the Druze and Circassians, are subject to the draft, and "the overwhelming majority" serve willingly, according to the Israel Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2004 of the US State Department.[27]

A third component of Israeli society that benefits from alleviated service requirements are women who are either pregnant, mothers, or married. Religious conviction also excuses women from service, and this is the only form of legally tolerated conscientious objection. Many of these religious women choose to complete *sheirut leumi,* an alternate national service option, which commits the participants to civilian service to help the country.

Conscientious objection is not a legally recognized excuse for service. According to the War Resisters' International (WRI) 2003 report, conscientious objection is partially recognized for women under article 39 of the National Defense Service Law, but this

pertains to only conscientious objection on religious grounds. Article 36 of the Defense Service Law pertains to unsuitability for service and it is the article cited most often by males who seek dismissal from their service for ideological reasons.[28] There is a distinction in the application of this law in favor of those who hold absolute pacifist beliefs, and against those who object to specific portions of military service.

The judgment of the December 2002 Israeli supreme court *case Zonschein v the Judge-Advocate General* ruled, contrary to prior policy, that conscientious objection for military dismissal was an implied, although not outright, entitlement. This case ruled that the phrase 'other reasons' in Article 36 of the Defense Service Law which enabled one to request exemption "for reasons connected with requirements of education, security, settlement, or the national economy or for family or *other reasons*" made conscientious objection a legitimate plea. This court case also established that selective refusal was not acceptable, and one must hold absolute pacifist beliefs.[29]

By law, everyone should be serving in the IDF, with the exception of selected religious communities, Arab Israelis, and women with children or husbands. In Israel's formative years, public morale for service in the army was extremely high, and this was the case, but in the latter half of Israeli history, the 1980s onward, the span of the IDF throughout Israeli society has declined.

B. Military Service In Defining Citizenship

Since the conception of Israel, the constant need for security permitted the military to creep into all facets of Israeli society, to the point where one's position in the military could easily translate into an equivalent amount of social power and esteem. As

it was everyone's obligation to serve in the army, one's contribution to the security of his/her country became a main parameter by which one would be judged. The collective identity of Israel, according to Baruch Kimmerling, was based on ethno-religious kinship and formal citizenship. Formal citizenship was defined by a set of universal rights in exchange for universal duties such as paying taxes and *serving in the army*.[30] The very nature of citizenship and belonging to the state of Israel was based on adherence to the code of service and sacrifice. Given this perception of the military, it is not surprising that newcomers to Israeli society would be attracted to joining the army in order to gain acceptance and social stature, as discussed by Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel: "[Immigrant] groups saw the army as a significant sphere in which to construct new routes of mobility and legitimately attain various civil rights. They also wanted to prove that they too were capable of matching the elite groups' achievements in combat."[31]

Not only immigrants but also disadvantaged groups within society have used the military structure to gain social clout in Israeli history. The *American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise* describes the process of military achievement translating into elevated citizen status in this passage: "In essence, the society and army are one, as a broad spectrum of the population serves periodically over many years, with those in and out of uniform virtually interchangeable. Since soldiers often hold ranks not necessarily corresponding with their status in civilian life, the IDF has become a highly effective equalizer in the society and contributes greatly to integrating individuals from all walks of life."[32] Mahal2000, the recruitment agency, describes the IDF's role as a social leveler as follows,

> David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, used to say the IDF is not only a means of defending the country, but also a means of integrating and building Israeli society… People from all social, economic and political backgrounds perform military service side by side, with the same conditions and rights. Going through the demands and rigors of army life on a totally egalitarian basis forges a common identity that totally transcends social and economic groupings.[33]

In Israel's formative years the military both helped develop a collective Israeli identity and created social cohesion.

C. Terms of Service in the Israeli Military

Service involves two mandatory components – initial conscription, followed by annual reserve duty. According to an *Economist Intelligence Unit* risk briefing, the majority of Israel's military capacity relies on conscription, with an estimated 64 percent of its 167,600 soldiers being conscripts in 2003. Officers are required to serve for 48 months, while regular service for men is 36 months and for women 24 months. Women and men both begin service at 18, and women serve in *miluim* "reserves" until the age of 38, while men serve until the age of 54, according to the Defense Service Law.[34] The month-long reserve requirement for men generally lasts until the age of 41, though it is often extended to 54 for elite members with special skills. Reserve duty for women is theoretically compulsory, but fewer women than men complete their reserve duty. A growing number of soldiers end up on opposite extremes when it comes to reserve service, either devoting more time than legally required in reserves or not being called for reserves at all.[35] This is something that IDF may chose to start monitoring again as the country enters a period marked by a motivation crisis for army recruitment.

D. Changes in Social Composition of the Military

The inequities in the social composition of the military is another taboo subject within Israeli society, for the social stratifications of the upper echelons of the military shatter the notion that the army is above ethno-class divisions. In the beginning, the IDF's top-ranks were filled by the same group that also dominated society and politics at large, the secular Ashkenazim (Jews of European descent). As many of the Ashkenazim discarded their previous hegemonic military framework for a more liberal discourse, three main groups – the modern religious, lower-middle class Sephardim (Jews from Arab descent), and lower-class immigrants vied for their role in the military elite. Currently, the military is noticeably in the hands of the modern religious following.

Political scientist Yagil Levy found in his January 2010 research about the military's social composition in conjunction with the protest movement that Israel's "internal ability in directing and implementing military policies" has fluctuated over the past twenty-five years. He examines the "social map of casualties," or which groups lost the most soldiers to war in the first and second Lebanon Wars in 1982 and 2006. Levy argues, applying Charles Tilly's theory of the linkage between military and political participation, that those groups who suffered the most loss were given more right to political bargaining. Levy uses casualty statistics to assess the contribution to the military of various social groups, in light of the fact that the IDF does not calculate the socio-demographic composition of its ranks. He finds that these bereavement statistics portray the group's public perception of the military and its wars, and reflect the "social attitudes [of each group] toward the ultimate cost of war – death."[36]

The Ashkenazi secular middle-upper class comprised the bulk of those sacrificed in the two Lebanon Wars. With this, it was the secular Ashkenazi who had the political legitimacy[37] to question and effectively limit the state's "freedom of operation." This fit in with the global context of state autonomy generally being lowered in democracies in the late twentieth century. According to Levy, the Ashkenazim experienced a growing sensitivity to loss, to which they responded by introducing to Israeli society the first mass protest movement against the military.

Groups who did not serve in the army, or made a lesser contribution, such as ultra-Orthodox Jews, Palestinian citizens, and women, have "been able to collect some rewards not based on the rest of military service but rather based on their own political power, wrapped in the liberal discourse of citizenship." Prior to the 1980's, such groups would have been immediately marginalized for not having had the utmost participatory experience in the military, which was prioritized at the head of both military and civil society.

The two Lebanon Wars are a good backdrop for examining the shifts in Israeli society mentioned above, e.g. the Ashkenazi introduction of a protest movement that lured them away from the military and the liberalization of the Israeli basis for political legitimacy. In 1982 Israel invaded South Lebanon in order to uproot the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was launching attacks on Northern Israel from its Southern Lebanon stronghold. The birth of the first mass protest movement in Israel happened during the First Lebanon War. It was one of the first times that the war's purpose was questioned, as opposed to the IDF's technique and effectiveness.[38]

The growing discontent of the Ashkenazim with their sacrifice for society can be seen in the organization of various groups that declared the deaths of their family members from war unnecessary. Two of these groups were the *Four Mothers Movement* and the *Beaufort Family*. These groups are significant because, "They could have interpreted the mission [in Lebanon] as heroic, as bereaved parents had done in previous wars…[but] by questioning the war's justification, the group [instead] moved away from the hegemonic model of bereavement that had hitherto focused on the justification of the loss, recognized its unquestioned necessity, and ascribed national significance to it."[39] These groups represented the beginning of the new framework that did not justify deaths for security and instead challenged the need for war. A slew of other organizations comprised not of family members of soldiers, but of the soldiers themselves, followed suit, making their service conditional on political goals in a way that had never been done before. (See section: Prevalence of Military Evasion)

The general public was influenced by the Ashkenazi-organized remonstrance, and public opinion regarding the war's justification changed. When the Labor government retracted its initial pro-war stance and proposed unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in the summer of 1983, it drew support from Ashkenazi protest movements such as *Peace Now*.[40]

The Second Lebanon War was another first in the Israeli narrative, as it was the first time Israel endured a military loss and subsequent crisis of faith. Israel had withdrawn to a security zone in South Lebanon in 1985, and out of Lebanon altogether in 2000. With popular support, in July 2006, Israel reinvaded Lebanon, seeking to remove the Hezbollah's presence in South Lebanon. The war broke out abruptly after the

kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, but also sought to address the escalation of rocket attacks and cross-border terrorist attacks that had been on the rise since Israel's 2000 withdrawal. Leading up to the war there was general restraint in Israel's policy to engage in a full-blown war. Israel was preoccupied with uprisings in the West Bank, hesitant to become embattled on two fronts if Syria responded to the offensive, and reluctant to disrupt the economic development that had begun in Northern Israel. Therefore, Israel appeared content merely to contain rather than to eradicate the Hezbollah threat. Israel's reluctance contributed to its defeat, according to one critic.[41]

> As soon as the guns fell silent, Israeli officials began to take stock of their new situation. There was unease. Declarations of victory rang hollow. While politicians and military officials squabbled over responsibility, the government appointed an inquiry committee headed by judge Eliyahu Winograd to sort the situation out. Still, the fact that there were serious strategic errors was clear.[42]

Among these strategic failures were an unwillingness to commit ground troops, lack of proper equipping of soldiers due to budgetary constraints, failure of Israel to acknowledge the severity of the war – not even declaring a state of emergency throughout its duration – and a lack of sufficient intelligence about Hezbollah's weaponry stash. "The continuous barrage of Katyushas at Israel's northern cities supported Hezbollah's claim to victory," according to one critic.[43] Levy viewed the war as a loss for Israel because Hezbollah was only pushed further back from the Israeli border, but not disarmed as desired, and because the three soldiers kidnapped since the start of the war were not released. The resulting crisis of faith led to the resignation of the Chief of Staff Dan Halutz and the Winograd commission of inquiry.[44]

The omnipotent prestige of the IDF was shattered, though sparks in the motivation to serve in combat after this loss show that the crisis of faith did not last for long. After the First Lebanon War in 1982, the necessity of war was questioned and after the Second Lebanon War in 2006 the invincibility of the army was. The largest social composition shift of the IDF's upper ranks happened in between these two wars, as new subgroups strived to redefine themselves through advancement in the military.[45]

Levy's statistics focused on the first week of the First Lebanon War because the composition of combat soldiers resembled that of the previous war in 1973. By the second week, the composition had already begun to change as a consequence of three factors: the staggering losses due to the guerilla warfare fighting technique, the motivation crisis that occurred with Israel's first mass protest movement, and the expansion of the war which demanded a "hastened entry of other groups" into the combat sector.

Levy found that between the First and Second Lebanon Wars the largest percentage difference in number of casualties occurred in that of the secular Ashkenazi grouping, who decreased 21 percent, going from 56 percent of the casualties in the first week of the First Lebanon War to 35 percent of the casualties in the Second Lebanon War. The group that had "founded the army, staffed its upper ranks, and identified with its achievements," was now turning its back on the military. He continues, "As such, this group, [the Ashkenazis], translated [their] dominance in the military into what was regarded as legitimate social dominance."[46]

This decline was influenced by doubt in the justification of the First Lebanon War as well as several other factors. The economic globalization of Israel left the upper-

middle class with materialistic values that no longer matched the ethos of individual sacrifice for the military. (See section: Economic Liberalization and the Peace Process) Political rifts also separated the Ashkenazis from those who believed in Israel's unchallenged military supremacy. The pivotal 1977 election in which the Sephardi-backed Likud party overturned the Ashkenazi-dominated Labor party for the first time in Israeli history,[47] according to Levy, "created the sense among members of the upper-middle class that the state had been 'taken away' from them."[48] In other words, they felt that they were receiving less for their historic military contribution and that it was no longer worth their commitment. The third factor that triggered the motivation crisis amongst the Ashkenazis, and led to a reorganization of the IDF is the emergence of a peace process and subsequent sense of security felt, relative to the external threats of Israel's birth period. The 1979 peace treaty resulting from the 1978 Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt contributed greatly to the sentiment that political methods were now a viable alternative to military conflict for securing the state the Israel. The fourth factor causing loss of military motivation amongst the IDF's Ashkenazi backbone was the disintegration of morale.

> The weakness demonstrated by the army in the Yom Kippur War (1973) and amplified by the failures in the First Lebanon War (1982-1985) and the First Intifada (1987-1993) contributed to the erosion of its prestige and thus denied upper-middle-class groups much of their historic, symbolic capital as omnipotent warriors.[49]

In addition, the loss of the Second Lebanon War and the discernible failure of Israel's most recent action in Gaza, Operation Cast Lead, further damaged IDF morale.

The decline in military participation of the secular Ashkenazi grouping represents the onset of a paradigm shift in the Israeli military beginning in the 1980s. New

minorities were given the opportunity to join the top ranks of the military. Levy clearly outlines those groups who ascended the military-social hierarchy,

> The traditional elite groups were replaced by groups that had previously been relegate to marginal roles in the military and positioned in the peripheral and semi-peripheral sections within the social hierarchy: (a) Mizrachim in the less upwardly mobile sectors; (b) religious youngsters, mostly middle class, who until the 1980s had largely shied away from military service due to fears of the secular influence of the army; (c) religious settlers in the occupied territories, the ideological core of the colonial vanguard that developed in the 1980's; (d) immigrants from the 1990s, mainly from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia and other countries, (e) Druze and Bedouin, part of the Arab minority in Israel, who since the 1990s have played an increasingly larger role in combat; and (f) women, who since the mid-1990s have gradually gained access to combat roles from which they had been totally excluded.[50]

All of a sudden, it was of great concern to find "less costly alternatives to belligerency." This caused the middle-class presence in combat units to shrink as they left the military realm to seek political outlets to voice their grievances with war and to find peaceful alternatives. The door of the military opened for other social groups to fill these sanctified spots. Levy's "casualty map" showed an increase in the percentage of casualties among religious Ashkenazi settlers, immigrants, and Ashkenazi agricultural sector including Kibbutzniks and Moshavniks,[51] and a slight increase in the Mizrachim lower/middle class.

After abandonment of the army by many of the secular Ashkenazi middle class, the next generation associated with military achievement was the Ashkenazi agricultural sector, followed by the modern religious movements, notably in the settlements.[52] The Kibbutzniks and Moshavniks were symbolically identified with generally having helped establish the state; now they became significantly involved in the elite military structure and maintained an "overly high proportional presence in the military," specifically in the

combat ranks. Some Kibbutz members were included in the overall decline of Ashkenazim in the military. The kibbutz movement was divided between those who maintained Zionist beliefs and contributed over-proportionally to the military, and those who defected in order to protest the military.

Lieblich questions one of her interviewees about the devotional status of the kibbutzim, since they send volunteers for the most difficult military assignments and make up a large portion of the officers in the army. She asks how this standard is communicated within the communities. Older generations set an example and high levels of competition exist that come from the intimate Kibbutzim community. Throughout the 1980s, the Kibbutzniks garnered the utmost respect for their overwhelming presence in the military elite. The Kibbutzim, however, beginning in the 1970s, fell victim to modernization. As people grew accustomed to material comfort, membership declined and many of the Kibbutzim lost their socialist doctrines. Likewise, between the 1970s and 1990s economic crises hit the Kibbutz community hard, as communal enterprise was forced to compete with Israel's globally integrated capitalist economic system and national emphasis strayed from the power of the collective.[53]

In lieu of this, in the 2000s, the modern religious community began to overshadow the proportion of Kibbutzniks in combat and the officer corps. The movement was considered to have taken the place of the kibbutz movement in the esteemed upper echelons of the military. Levy confirmed, "Religious youngsters were depicted as gradually taking the place of the youngsters from the kibbutzim, becoming the IDF's new 'service elite.'" When the Kibbutz movement was marginalized, "The growing strength of the rightist religious presence was even portrayed as a political-

military danger, one which the leftist kibbutz movement, by abandoning its role in the military, had helped create," confirmed Levy.

In an online question and answer session by *Haaretz* newspaper readers with Yossi Hyman, Brigadier General and overall commander of the IDF Infantry Corps and Paratroops, answered the question, "Is there a parallel between religious soldiers today and soldiers from kibbutzim in the 60's, in terms of their role, performance, and presence in the *Matkal*?" *(Matkal* "General Staff Reconnaissance Unit" is one of the most acclaimed units in the IDF known for its deep reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, and counter-terrorism skills.) Hyman confirmed a strong similarity between religious soldiers today, particularly "graduates of pre-military academies," e.g. the religious Zionist *yeshiv*ot, and the kibbutz members "who were the fighters of yesteryear." Hyman responded, "This phenomenon is in my opinion very important and I see it as very positive."[54]

One of the institutions that facilitated the flood of modern religious youth into the most desired military positions was the agreement between the IDF and selective yeshivas to combine torah study and IDF service under one program, the *Hesder* program. *Hesder* "arrangement", enabled the religious Zionist movement to serve meaningfully in the IDF, without compromising the men's religious studies. Almost all *Hesder* participants serve in combat. Most *Hesder* programs are between four and five years, with around 16-18 months of that being military training and active duty. 41 yeshivas and thousands of students are included in this arrangement.[55] The success of the *Hesder* program illustrates the invasive role of the modern-religious in the composition of

today's military. In 1991, for their contribution to society the *yeshivot hesder* were even awarded the *Israel Prize*, one of the state's highest honors.[56]

Enlistment rates for this population are higher than ever before and on the rise, according to the *Hesder Yeshivot Union*. Out of the 850 yeshiva students who enrolled in the army in March 2010, 73.5 percent of them are serving as combatants.[57] Another 170 *Hesder* participants have joined non-combat units. Another 550 *Hesder* students are slated to enlist in the summer draft this August, and another in 100 in November. The recruitment of *Hesder* participants for the year of 2010 is predicted to rise 11 percent, compared with last year.[58] The attraction of the modern religious community to the military and its saturation of the army's upper ranks reflects an opposite trend of the departing of other groups from military circles. The case of the modern religious community portrays the polarization of the military, whereby those who chose to serve do so ardently, but have become a smaller, more marginalized proportion of broader Israeli society.

The modern religious, who had previously expressed themselves through their leaders – rabbis and political figures, had now earned their own individual political clout. The development of a political voice for this religious community can be attributed to the dependency the IDF now had on this group, "a dependency that became critical in light of the shortfalls in human resources for combat units that the drop in motivation among the secular middle class caused," said Levy.[59]

Another important group that changed the composition of the military and larger Israeli society was the influx of immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU), the largest wave of immigration to hit Israel. This immigration wave was already beginning

in the 1970s but became most pronounced the following two decades after the collapse of Soviet Union. Throughout those few decades, Israel absorbed about 800,000 FSU immigrants, comprising about 15 percent of the total population of Israel.[60] The FSU immigrants objected to the prevalence of military ideology, and contributed to the decline in military prestige by promoting alternate focuses, like economics, and injecting a Western, liberal mentality into Israeli endeavors.

The mass of Russian immigrants came to Israel educated, professionally skilled and with a general elitist attitude, factors that served as a hindrance to their absorption into military culture. [61] They did not fit neatly into the military framework still prevalent in Israeli society, and a social cleavage resulted between these secular Ashkenazi Russian immigrants and the veteran traditional/religious Sephardim.[62] Their secular, even questionable Judaism, with over one third of them not even considered Jewish by Halacha,[63] was another factor that impeded their desire to join the military. The elitist attitude of the former Soviet Union (FSU) immigrants kept them from wanting to assimilate into Israeli society, thus decreasing their motivation to use the IDF as a catalyst for such integration. Political scientist Stuart Cohen illustrates the elitism of the FSU immigrants in their attempt to retain their separate identity in Israeli society, deliberately creating Russian speaking schools, theatres, newspapers, and TV channels for this purpose.[64] He writes, "Unlike [Israel's wave of immigrant] Ethiopians, FSU immigrants constitute an enclave in Israel's societal fabric out of choice."[65] Cohen also asserts that IDF enlistment practices reinforced the marginalization of FSU immigrants, further impeding on their service motivation.

> According to the State Comptroller, new immigrant 18-year-olds were four times less likely to be drafted into service than their secular sabra peers, and – if enlisted – three times more likely to be reported AWOL and/or receive an early discharge. Moreover, although new immigrants, especially from the FSU, attained high KABA scores,[66] they were assigned in disproportionate numbers to low-grade technical occupations (drivers and general services.) Of those who served in combat units, many bunched together in the Givati infantry brigade, so much so that it became known as Israel's 'Red Army'. Only two percent went on to officers' training courses (as opposed to 14 percent in the case of vatikim [veterans]). [67]

Stuart contends that FSU immigrants possessed negative views of the military: "The idea that enlistment might be token patriotism is simply absent from their discourse. So, too, is the notion of service as a catalyst of national identity. Once drafted, male FSU immigrants typically evince little enthusiasm for the IDF." This is in part because of their attitude towards the military in their respective countries of origin.[68] Also, many of the immigrants, especially FSU immigrants, were older than acceptable drafting age. In 1992 the ratio of people age 65 and over per thousand people age 15-64 was 218 in the immigrant community, as opposed to 139 in the broader Jewish population of Israel, including the immigrants.[69]

Though the Russian contribution to field combat was not as significant as that of other groups, the massive waves of Russian immigration renewed the Israeli economy and boosted the high-tech industry, allowing "the integration of IDF veterans' know-how with the knowledge brought by Russian immigration." Economist Shlomo Maoz discusses the pressure and emphasis on education that Russian immigrants brought to Israel: "They are very ambitious, which caused the veterans to fear for their status and therefore made them more hard-working and more competitive. They affected education rates.[70] In fact, in 1995, 55 percent of immigrants age 15 and over had over 13 years of

education, compared to the 25 percent of Israel's total Jewish population in 1989. By 1993, the number of engineers and architects among immigrants was double that of their number in the Israeli labor force.[71]

The large wave of Russian immigrants entered Israeli society in the 1980s and 1990s, at a time of economic revolution. The FSU immigrants introduced a lack of enthusiasm for the military and a commitment to a more Westernized approach to society that left little room for hegemonic militarism and added to the growing restructuring of key societal values.

In the most recent analysis of military demographics, political scientists are starting to see geo-political stratification of those who serve, and more vividly within those who serve in combat. The more affluent cities, like Tel Aviv and its surrounding suburbs, Herzliya, Petach Tiqva, Rishon L'tzion, are all being criticized for not sharing equally in the burden of service. As these areas tend to house citizens with more liberal politics and more materialistic economic values, sacrificing one's self as a combat soldier is not as popular choice a choice as seen with other socio-economic and geographic areas of Israel, like the settlement Yeshiva population. These cities, Tel Aviv especially, house a diverse variety of populations ranging from migrant workers to Israel's most affluent businessmen. The lack of homogenous identity makes it harder to instill a unified combat motivation amongst the urban inhabitants. It is also important to note that they have not been directly impacted by the most recent wars. The rockets fired from Gaza in the 2008-2009 battle with Gaza hit Southern cities like Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Beersheva.[72] The rocket fire was "not close to home" for Tel Avivians, and it was possible for what is known as the 'Tel Aviv bubble' to continue unaffected by the outbreak of violence.[73]

In an interview, Shlomo, a graduate of the elite commando air force unit *Sheldag*, said that people from Israeli cities in the center, like Tel Aviv, cannot understand that war is still happening all the time. Shlomo, raised in the West Bank settlement of Alon Shvut, is an example of someone from the right-wing modern-religious movement, which perpetuates the hegemonic military discourse without embracing Israeli liberalization.[74] Hila, a female interviewee from Ashkelon who served in the army's most elite intelligence body *Unit 8200*, comes from a very different background but voices similar thoughts. Hila's secular Sephardic family has also not adopted the marginal outlook of the military demanded by liberal discourse. She believes, like Shlomo, that the inhabitants of Israel's city centers are taking for granted the relative calm they feel in their daily lives. These interviews confirm that despite the novelty and growing presence of Israeli liberalization, military values have, as of yet, not been removed from the average Israeli identity.[75]

The IDF has been criticizing the regional inequality of commitment to the military since the early twenty-first century, but refuses to calculate the socio-demographic composition of the military, maintaining the disillusion that the IDF is truly representative of all of Israel, and therefore cannot support their accusations of this trend with hard evidence. IDF Manpower Director Chief Elazar Stern said in a radio interview with *Galgalatz* Army Radio in August 2006 that he has not visited bereaved families in Tel Aviv recently, which was the closest he could come to outright disapproval.[76] Levy notes that, "Unlike in other armies, the ethno-class stratification of the IDF is considered a taboo subject. In keeping with the discourse that portrays the army as being above ethno-class divisions in Israeli society (the 'people's army'), no official statistics are

available regarding the representation of different groups, which therefore has to be deduced from disparate indications."[77]

III. Changing Attitudes Toward Conscription: Collective to Individual

A. Prevalence of Military Evasion

Skirting one's military service was both highly frowned upon and strictly illegal in Israeli society. Evasion laws refer to those who refuse to serve and those who refuse to obey a specific order; both are considered civil disobedience and can result in military and civil charges. Such evasion was close to unheard of before the broad military protest movement that began in the 1980s with the First Lebanon War. From the pre-state period until 1970, just over 100 Jewish Israelis had publicly announced their conscientious objection and desire not to serve. There was no official government policy for dealing with this, and each case was judged individually, most resulting in quiet settlement.[78] In the past, tangible consequences would have been implemented in the civilian sector for one who did not contribute to the military. Most employers would not hire someone who had not served in the army. Licenses were not granted without reserve cards, and resistors had a hard time getting around this. House mortgages were denied to draft resistors. There were cases in the 1950's where passports were confiscated and food ration stamps denied. Authors Martin Blatt, Uri Davis, and Paul Kleinbaum illustrated the unsystematic response of the government to the earliest military protesters: "Solutions and compromises offered by the authorities in cases where [IDF] harassment seemed to have failed were far from uniform. Some resisters were unconditionally exempted; others were offered placement in non-combat units; still others performed alternative service."[79]

As time progressed, despite still being strictly outlawed, the number of service evaders has steadily increased. Sources venture that in reality somewhere from one third to one half of the eligible population successfully circumvents their obligatory service.[80]

These statistics fluctuate based on the source and the year they originate. In 2003, IDF manpower division commander Major General Gil Regev reported to the Knesset that 34 percent of youth conscription age were not fulfilling their army service,[81] further indicating the disintegration of military ethos.

IDF data of the Summer 2007 draft showed that one in four Jewish Israelis born in 1989 evaded the draft by obtaining a medical or religious exemption, having a criminal record, or living overseas.[82]One statistic from 2009 affirmed that 25 percent of men and 40 percent of women at the age of recruitment skirt their duty to serve.[83] By 2010, the draft avoidance numbers climbed to 28 percent of men and 46 percent of women not fulfilling their duty, according to IDF data, an increase for both genders. The head of the IDF Personnel Directorate, Major-General Avi Zamir, warned that by 2020, the IDF could have 40 percent of Jewish teenagers evading service overall, even though, according to the army's Planning and Manpower Administration Department in July 2008, 48 percent of teenagers overall were already evading service.[84] Similarly bleak projections come from a British newspaper in October 2009 which asserted that "about a third of the eligible population in Israel now avoid being called up for national service and that figure is expected to pass 50 percent by 2025,"[85] an expected increase of ten percent in just five years.

Colonel Tziki Sela, head of the military Planning and Manpower Administration department. Sela reported that there were approximately 7,000 draft dodgers per year. Despite conflicting estimates and speculation of impending draft dodging rates, statistics confirm a steady increase of service evasion in the recent years that was not present in years surrounding the formation and maturation of Israel. [86]

In 2003, military exemptions broke down as follows: 11.5 percent discharged for mental health reasons, 9.5 percent for religious reasons, five percent because they lived abroad, 2.6 percent because of low IQ or other reasons, and 1.4 percent because of criminal records for serious crimes.[87] Out of the 27 percent of males and 45 percent of females exempted in 2009, 11.5 were now dismissed for religious reasons, 2 percent for medical reasons, 5 percent because of mental health reasons, 4.5 percent because of criminal records, and 4 percent because of living abroad.[88] Though these statistics are not comparable because of the different parameters used, like an 'other' category in the former and medical reasons separate from psychological reasons in the latter, they corroborate the general trends in the composition of exemption excuses. An article dated July 2008 noted the army's admission that there had been an increase in exemptions given to men for medical reasons, criminal records, and living abroad.[89]

When Zamir factored in Israeli Arab youth, whose service is voluntary, the figure of eligible youth not enlisting for their national service could be as high as 70 percent. Zamir lamented that, "Even now the notion of 'the people's army' is fraying and if these trends continue we'll be on the brink of an abyss."[90] Infrastructures Minister Uzi Landau shared this sentiment when he said in November 2009 that the army is no longer an army of the people, but an army of half the people.[91]

Draft dodging has taken both the form of formal protest and individual dissent in Israeli society. Several commonly known, informally publicized methods of evasion are used by Israeli individuals, some more popular than others. Boys would purposely incur injuries that would temporarily dismiss them from service or take medications that would make them sick to go on sick leave. Girls would get pregnant and eventually have

abortions or arrange fake marriages since married women are dismissed from service.[92] Israeli model Bar Refaeli was exposed for having arranged a fake marriage to an older family friend in order to avoid her draft and pursue her career in fashion. Certain Israeli clothing companies threatened to terminate her contracts until she found a way to make up her military service, volunteering with injured soldiers. [93]

Other rumored means for evasion include purposefully obtaining a criminal record, bribing a doctor to invent a medical or psychological impediment, or pretending to be a pacifist. The statistics mentioned above cannot distinguish between those who actually deserve to be excused from service and those who orchestrated their own dismissal, but the drastic decline in available military personnel is apparent and significant even without this distinction.[94]

One of the most common ways that girls exempt themselves from service is by claiming to be religious when in truth they are not. A March 2007 Knesset report on military service found that 43 percent of female draft candidates receive exemptions, and 76 percent of these are for religious reasons.[95] IDF Head of the Personal Directorate Avi Zamir, in speaking with high school youth from Ashdod in January 2010 , was highly critical of the current 38 percent of teenage girls who falsely claim religious observance to evade service, forewarning that this number is “not too far off” from reaching 50 percent. "A girl who drives on Yom Kippur with a non-Kosher sandwich in her hand can come and request an exemption on religious grounds and by law, I have to accept her claim," said head of the military Planning and Manpower Administration department Sela. This phenomenon has become so widespread that the military has developed responsive programs to investigate whether such claims to religious exemption are

genuinely warranted. (See section: Governmental Initiatives to Resist Military Recruitment Losses). Similarly, Sela declared that 25 percent of all youth who evade service do so by lying about attending Orthodox yeshivas when they do not, demonstrating that this method is prevalent among both genders.[96]

Such methods for evasion become common knowledge among teenagers in the years before they reach the draft and begin to picture themselves in the military. This phenomenon is reflected in the military vernacular that grew to define different forms of evasion. The word *mnatznetz* describes someone who runs away from his/her duties, and the phrase *tafas shalva,* literally "to have caught a break," or "snatched repose," describes a shirked military duty. Other words that describe conscientious objectors include *sarvanim* "dissenters" and *mishtamtim* "evaders."[97] The colloquial term *refuseniks* originally described Soviet Jews who were denied the right to emigrate from the Soviet Union abroad.[98] Overtime, the term entered the English lexicon as a word for "a person who refuses to comply with orders or the law as a protest,"[99] and it is also used in contemporary Israeli context to describe those who refuse to serve, with a general negative connotation that the refuseniks themselves have inverted to have a positive and proud implication.[100]

The first well-known case of refusal to serve was that of Amnon Zichroni in 1954, just six years after the official establishment of the IDF. Zichroni, now a very prominent criminal lawyer in Israel, and considered one of the first civil society advocates, asked to be released from his military service at the age of eighteen because of his universal pacifist beliefs. His staunch convictions of conscientious objection resulted in a very public trial, and Zichroni's twenty-two day hunger strike almost resulted in his death. He

was ultimately released by the decision of Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan himself, when the army decided they no longer had interest in prolonging their case against Zichroni.[101]

Other prominent cases of individual conscientious objectors include the two of the sons of Ehud Olmert, former Prime Minister of Israel, one who refused to serve in the occupied territories and one who refused to serve altogether. Omer Goldman, famous for being the daughter of Naftali Granot, a former deputy Mossad chief, is a draft evader.[102] Jonathan Ben-Artzi, nephew of Benjamin Netanyahu, current Prime Minister of Israel, is also widely famous for the severity of his punishment and prolonged process of trial in which the army could not break this conscientious objector. Ben-Artzi is a full-fledged pacifist who knew from a very young age that he would never bear the IDF uniform, writing to the Minister of Defense at the age of 16 asking to be exempted.[103] Ben-Artzi comes from a family of military heroes, having been named after a relative who died in the 1976 raid on Entebbe, while freeing Jewish hostages, and with two grandfathers renowned for fighting for Israel's independence. Mostly because of his high-profile status, Ben-Artzi has spent more time in prison than any other Israeli conscientious objector on the public radar – more than 200 days. He was summoned by a court martial to serve in March 2003, the first case to be dealt with this harshly in three decades.[104]

> His objection strikes at the heart of what Israel has become, and it clearly unnerves the army. 'In Israel, the army is a kind of god and I was expected to worship it from as young as I can remember,' he says…'They are making a bid for these children, to recruit them to the paratroopers or engineering corps or whichever. They are guided down a mental corridor to the military. There's a lot of social pressure from the principal, teachers, friends.'[105]

Though a "conscience committee" was assigned to preside over Ben-Artzi's case, the committee of serving officers immediately determined that Ben-Artzi was not a

pacifist. Ben-Artzi and his like-minded friends experienced a variety of bizarre events surrounding their attempts to get dismissed from the army using the military system. At the competence hearing of Ben-Artzi's friend Uri Ya'akovi, Ya'akovi was told up front that he was not allowed to mention pacifism or conscientious objection, so when asked why he did not want to serve he made a big issue of not liking the uniforms. Ben-Artzi was told in one of his hearings that his persistence to get out of the army was actually soldier-like, which is why he could not be a pacifist. At his court martial, Ben-Artzi was finally recognized as an honest pacifist, and the Conscience Committee was blamed for their unfair proceedings, but the civil court could not appeal the previous decisions of the military court and supreme court to which Ben-Artzi had appealed and been rejected. The civil court recommended the military court not enforce any punishment, but the military court did. In the end Ben-Artzi fought for over eight years and served 18 months in military prison for his beliefs before charges against him were finally dropped. [106] The military harassed these individuals, finding it less damaging to IDF esteem to trivialize the protesters pleas than to recognize a framework in which the military is not all-powerful.

B. Conscientious Objection as an Organized Movement

The first significant wave of conscientious objection arose with the First Lebanon War in 1982 and was represented by reserve soldiers. Prior to the First Lebanon War, organized conscientious objection was surprisingly small. Sociologist Shlomo Reznik believes that the development of both a left-wing refusal to serve movement and a right-wing underground anti-peace movement in the early 1980s occurred as a product of the

Israel's transition from "the First Israeli Republic," born out of war, to the "Second Israeli Republic," a result of the peace process and Israel's first peace treaty with an Arab state, the 1978 Camp David accords. Reznik credited the conscientious objector movement as a catalyst for this transition: "The groups under discussion here played a central role in that struggle, breaking the old rules in an attempt to redefine the relationship between the state army and society in Israel."[107]

Since the 1980s, several national protest groups have emerged, centered on their opposition to mandatory IDF service, primarily around refusal of a particular aspect of service rather than overall participation in the military. An article in *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analysis*, said that such protest was "formerly the domain of human rights activists," but that a "loosely organized association of Israel officers and soldiers moved to the forefront of this controversial debate."[108]

The 2004 *Economist* Intelligence Unit Risk Briefing on Israel, said that the public and military debate over refusing to serve in the Palestinian Territories due to disapproval of the Israeli army's tactics has not led to widespread refusal to serve and that the military has "sufficient resources to pursue its current strategy." The implication that the military has sufficient alternate manpower, is no longer certain. The army's headcount has been consistently decreasing for the past few decades, of which the military is finally starting to feel the accumulation, causing the IDF and government to more carefully address the demands of its soldiers.[109]

Until recently, there was no single umbrella organization that encompassed all the "refusenik" groups. The groups, however, were unified by common objectives such as a general orientation toward the political left, an urban membership, and a desire to

challenge the state's autonomy regarding the security discourse through "non-action." The refusal to serve protest groups also differentiated themselves from other social movements of the time, because they "reflected a desire to recast the central values of Israeli society."[110] They began with the common realization that their disobedience was merely symbolic and that the IDF was winning the numbers game. The rapid drop in recruitment rates, as seen in the twenty-first century, suggests, however, that the tides have turned and that the IDF's previous glory may be unsustainable.

It was commonly accepted prior to the First Lebanon War that active soldiers were prohibited from engaging in political activity. Thus, the first protest groups to enter the Israeli scene consisted mostly of reservist soldiers who facilitated the dissent. Political groups that had existed previously, like *Peace Now*, founded in 1978, and the small political party *Sheli,* founded in 1981, focused more on the broader discussion of peace and less on military issues. Two of the early movements that formed in response to the Lebanon war and occupation were *Yesh Gvul* (There is a Limit) and *Soldiers Against Silence*. These groups functioned within and respected the Israeli value system and the necessary role of the military, which is why they did not voice their dissent until after the initial stage of the war. "In Israel, which has had to defend itself from the outset against great odds, war is not take lightly and certainly not rejected lightly," said political scientist Myron Joel Aronoff. The protest began in reaction to the prospect of the IDF's advance further into Lebanon, invading West Beirut, where the PLO was shielding themselves behind the half-a-million Lebanese civilian population.[111]

Both groups comprised mainly Kibbutz-born reservists of upper-middle class secular Ashkenazi descent. They sought to show the IDF and the public that their

willingness to serve was conditional on political aims. Because these objectors came from one of the dominant social groups at the time, the Kibbutzniks, their unprecedented rejection of social norms regarding sacrifice and service had a larger impact. According to Aronoff, "When a Kibbutz-born reservist rejects this norm, he rejects one of the basic values of Israeli society in general, and of Kibbutz society in particular." Aronoff categorized the stages of development of this new movement as leading from protest towards dissent. In this stage of dissonance, the protest groups actually lost their mainstream support and were forced to abandon the spotlight for the remainder of the war, explained Aronoff.[112]

These early groups relied mainly on rallies and petitions to assert their views. The coalition between *Peace Now* and *Sheli*, known as the *Committee Against the War in Lebanon*, held the largest rallies, gathering 20,000 people on June 26, 1982, 100,000 people on July 3, and 10,000 on August 7. The largest crowd was rumored to have numbered 400,000 people; these protesters gathered on September 25 after the extent of massacre in Lebanon was revealed, toward the end of the war. The protesters called for a government commission to investigate who bore responsibility for such high death tolls. The decline in mass-support between the first and middle rallies can be attributed to the acclimation of society to the reality of another war and the harsh criticism of the movement, especially that which the Kibbutz reservists groups received from the larger Kibbutz community.[113]

Soldiers Against Silence organized a petition signed by 2,000 reservists, a feat in comparison to the initial petitions, which garnered only a couple hundred signatures. According to Aronoff, the movement quieted down between August and September upon

realizing the futility of their efforts, and only *Yesh Gvul* remained with an intact following at the end of the war. Aronoff is correct in his conclusions that the movement's actions began sporadically and that they were unable to mobilize wider support, but as his research was limited to the 1980s he failed to foresee the emergence of a variety of similar protest-evasion groups and the unification of these voices that would begin in the 1990s.[114] *Courage to Refuse* co-founders Guy Grossman and Rami Kaplan recognized the permanent changes in government and military accountability: "*Yesh* Gvul struck a chord in Israeli society…From then on, it became clear to the Israeli government that unnecessary use of military force would run the immediate threat of massive disobedience."[115]

Yesh Gvul emerged again with the outbreak of the first Intifada, which lasted from 1987 to 1993. In this period, 200 members of the movement were imprisoned for refusing to fight against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Though they viewed themselves as willing to defend, they felt that the army was asking them to engage in repressing civilians outside of Israel's borders. When the Oslo peace accords were signed in 1993, the military service protest movement retreated into the background, to reemerge consistently in times of heightened external conflict like the Second Intifada that began in 2000 and retreat in moments of internal concession or bouts of relative peace, like the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005.[116]

Other key protest groups materialized in the late 1990s, including *Ometz Laserev* (Courage to Refuse), *Shministim* (The twelfth-graders), *Refuser Solidarity Network*, *Lochmim Lshalom* (Combatants for Peace), *Profile Chadash* (New Profile), *Refusing to Kill*, as well as several initiatives organized by military units rather than private

organizations, like the *Pilots' Letter* and the *Commandos' Letter* by acclaimed unit *Sayeret Matkal*.

Courage to Refuse, in Hebrew *Ometz Laserev*, was organized in January 2002 around the publishing of the *Combatants' Letter* by 51 Israeli combat reserve officers. Within one month the number of signatures grew to 200, and they reached 600 within a year. Expressing the group's disapproval of serving in the occupied territories the letter read, "We shall not continue to fight beyond the 1967 borders in order to dominate, expel, starve, and humiliate an entire people." This act was described by Grossman and Kaplan as nothing less than a "political and social earthquake." They claim that *Courage to Refuse* surfaced in the midst of the radicalization of the political dispute surrounding occupation. The social costs of refusal were already quite high, as the majority of society regarded such actions as betrayal. The risks associated with breaching the law in military protest grew as imprisonment became a more commonplace consequence.[117] Nevertheless, *Courage to Refuse* claimed 1,000-1,500 military refusers during its early years. While these numbers remain inconsequential to the broader military manpower, the movement was rapidly growing and the non-conformity of the military's own elite attaching personal politics to their service had a very high symbolic effect.

The release of the *Combatant's Letter* was groundbreaking in that it used the IDF's own venerated members to send a message that could no longer be ignored because of the military authority of those who voiced it. *Courage to Refuse* limited its membership specifically to reserve combat officers and soldiers who are overall supportive of Israel. This particular background was advantageous in making Israeli society consider the soldier's critical message, exploiting the legitimacy and respect the

Courage to Refuse soldiers' had because they were military speaking against the military. They presented themselves as "taking responsibility in order to reshape the future of their beloved state, a natural continuation of the spirit of devotion and faithfulness that represents the values of 'genuine' Zionism." They appeared as part of the collective, framing their objection within the military hegemony.[118] When one individual was asked why he signed a letter instead of just traveling abroad to avoid service, he responded,

> Military service is very important for me. That is why I have refused...I have identified myself with all the values IDF represents; even nowadays I do. Honestly! You know, it is often said that IDF is one of the most moral armies in the world…In my opinion it is true nowadays as well. That is what you learn in officers' course. I believe that in its core Israeli army is the most moral in the world. But the problem is that in the Occupied Territories it collapses, it doesn't work.[119]

This soldier joined the protest movement because he felt that the IDF was violating their own core values.

The message of refusal was disseminated through Israel's largest media outlets. Refusers were interviewed for leading newspapers, authored their own opinion columns, and appeared on numerous television programs. While many of the outlets publishing opinion pieces on the matter were clear in their objection to the movement, military refusal had now become a legitimate and popular enough opposition the media was obligated to address. Grossman and Kaplan mention national surveys periodically conducted in the twenty-first century that consistently showed about one quarter of the Jewish population approving of a soldier's right to refuse serving in the occupied territories, which was a more generous reception than when the protest movement first emerged in the 1980s.

The *Courage to Refuse* movement inspired other refusal groups to follow. Two more official petitions were signed by other military elites – *the Pilots' Letter* and *the Commandos' Letter* by *Sayeret Matkal*. *The Pilots' Letter* was the first such protest letter to come from the elite ranks of the air force. It was published in September 2003, signed by twenty-seven reserve pilots. It announced their refusal to carry out attacks on civilian areas, but maintained that they were devoted to the IDF and the state of Israel.[120] The *Commandos' Letter* came just months later in December, signed by 13 reservists from one the army's most acclaimed units, *Sayeret Matkal*. The commandos wrote, "We shall no longer corrupt our moral character in missions of oppression," regarding serving in the West Bank and Gaza.[121] The *Courage to Refuse* movement, however, had exhausted its own potential for expansion within the first year. All the protest movements declined in popularity immediately after the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, an extremely complex and emotionally charged moment in Israeli history. Focus shifted internally, and the protest movements' focus on external occupation was temporarily set-aside in public discourse. The groups that reemerged after the withdrawal have taken a more radical view of the military, and thus *Courage to Refuse* lost much of its spot in the limelight to these new absolute pacifist groups. The *High-School Seniors' Letter*, which became the *Shministim* movement was the first of its kind to be signed by protesters that had not and did not plan to serve in the military at all, representing the new generation of conscientious objection.[122]

The *Refuser Solidarity Network* (RSN) is another protest organization that stems from the 2002 *Combatants' Letter*. As membership in *Courage to Refuse* was limited to elite reserve soldiers, RSN became the more populist organization educating about

military refusal, as opposed to actively refusing to serve themselves. They were one of the first organizations to consolidate the voice of Israeli military dissent, working closely with almost all the aforementioned protest organizations.[123] In March of 2004, RSN brought the Israeli military protest to the U.S., organizing a conference in Chicago called "Carrying the Refuser Message to the Mainstream." Representatives of *The Parents' Forum*, *Courage to Refuse*, *Shministim*, *New Profile*, and *Yesh Gvul* all participated.[124] The actions of early refusal movements were inconsistent and loosely organized, but efforts like that of RSN, at the turn of the century and throughout the 2000s, strengthened the various groups into a unified opposition movement that represented cross-sections of Israeli society, no longer just a homogeneous minority.

The creation of another protest organization, the feminist NGO *New Profile*, was particularly elucidating of the restructuring of Israeli values. *New Profile* was created in 1998 according to their charter, but assumed an active role in Israel society in the decade of the 2000s. The organization's sole aim was to spread awareness to the Israeli public about the unnecessary militarization of civil society. They suggested that the first step in stemming militarism was to start noticing it in daily life, a dictum that applied both to societal nuances like an excess of masculine traits in the Israeli individual to the larger assaults like the military's unwarranted use of force against the Palestinians. An organization accepted by the larger protest movement and a significant portion of the public that challenges the very framework of thought as such is a strong sign of a new phase in Israeli life.[125]

One central group in the most recent protest discourse is *Shministim,* a group of conscription-age high school seniors with pacifist principles against serving in the IDF.

The *Shministim* are considered more controversial than past protesters, because whereas reservists were somewhat detached from the military core, called upon for only short tours of duty, the younger *Shministim* threaten the very conscription process from which the army draws its strength. Rejecting the notion of service altogether, they emphasize a form of non-conformity that contradicts what had been, up until this point, a fundamental value in Israeli society.[126] The *Shministim* use this controversy to remain in the public eye and spread their message. The spectacle that *Shministim* trials and hearings become, like that of "the Five," five *Shministim* who were court-martialed together in 2002, is used to garner sympathy for the youngsters and their cause.[127] Befitting the youthful generation, a variety of new tactics are used to disperse the *Shministim* message. The *Shministim* go on tours mainly throughout Europe and the United States, testifying about their refusal experiences. In October 2009, three *Shministim* traveled to South Africa, where they delivered a speech in memory of an anti-apartheid activist who was murdered and appeared on a South African television news show. In Fall 2010 the *Shministim* participated in a lecture tour of U.S. college campuses.[128] Spreading the word through social networking sites helped connect the *Shministim* to their supporters throughout the world, giving them access to outside opinion and worldwide recognition not previously enjoyed by refusal groups. Website updates provide instantaneous alerts about the sentencing of *Shministim* on trial. Protests are organized with the click of a button, as seen with the January 28, 2010 protest using the tagline, "Don't let the Israeli state silence Emilia Marcovich" at the Israeli Embassy in London, organized through *Facebook*. The young faces of the *Shministim* leaders have been branded as part of the *Free the Shministim* campaign organized by the American organization *Jewish Voice for*

Peace, and they became symbolic of opposition to the occupation.[129] The *Shministim* are adamant about taking on this public role, no matter how much it aggravates the IDF or heightens the punishments for refusal. [130]

Unlike the *Yesh Gvul* and *Courage to Refuse* movements, the *Shministim* would not embed themselves within the hegemonic military framework just to further their ends. In an article entitled "The Troubled Conscience of an Israeli Soldier," *America Magazine* interviews a father and son, both army resisters but of different generations. The father, Adam Keller, explained that when he protested as part of the *Yesh Gvul* movement "his generation [of] refuseniks respected the institution of the army, even while resisting its orders…For refuseniks of his son Uri's generation, the army, perceived more as an occupier than protector, has lost its luster." Uri's father was content with serving as long it did not reinforce Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, but for *Shministim* like Uri, even the option of non-combat service still enables the military's dominance in society in a way they cannot accept.

Uri was brought before a commanding officer and asked if he was willing to enlist seven times, each time getting a 28-day jail sentence. He was finally taken to an Incompatibility Hearing, before being declared unfit to serve, at which point his father Adam Keller announced Uri was "now part of family tradition."[131] The case of the Keller family is one with profound implications. Though the protest movement continues as a growing presence within Israel, it has not completely overturned Israel's traditional founding values. Today's Israel exists in a unique interim period in which two ideological frameworks, incompatible with one another, have emerged. The first is deeply entrenched within Israeli society, having literally been born with the country itself; the second

reflects the more progressive trends of modernization and globalization that have begun to transform Israeli society. That one generation has passed on the ideals of military protest to the next illustrates the durability of this new value system in lasting through the past several decades of Israeli growth. The degree to which dissent has become radicalized, and military protest is no longer tolerant of traditional values, brings Israeli society to a point of dissonance in which one framework or the other must eventually prevail. The IDF has only in recent years realized the magnitude of this dilemma. Whether or not the IDF's counter-initiatives can salvage its standing and prevent the tide of this shifting value system is yet to be determined.

C. Passive Resistance Supplementing the Refusal Movement

Breaking the Silence is another resistance organization, but its tactics are somewhat different from the active protesters. This group collects the testimonies of veteran soldiers who have served in the occupied territories and tells about the injustices these soldiers witnessed first-hand. They have been sending representatives all over the world to deliver their soldier testimonies since 2004 and in effect their stories have the same impact as groups like *Courage to Refuse*.[132] Similarly, *The Parents' Forum*, while not directly organized to promote evasion, shares the same sentiment and advocates military protest among another audience within Israeli society, that of the concerned family members of soldiers.

The Parents' Forum was formed around the time that the political debate over occupation and refusal heated up in the early 2000s. Their sons and daughters were often jailed on grounds related to their political tactics of resistance, more than their individual

objection to serving in the army. *The Parents' Forum* sought to expose this, arranging vigils to support the activists in jail and sending letters to target politicians, urging for lighter punishments.[133] The work of *the Parents' Forum* illustrates the growing influence of the civilian sphere over the army and the accountability of the army to parents' lobbying forces.[134]

Refusing to Kill is another more passive organization that played a supportive role for the refusal movement without being on the forefront of service evasion. This group sometimes goes by the name Payday and has 19 chapters around the world. Based in London and Philadelphia, the Israeli chapter works closely with local refuser groups and maintains an extensive database of articles concerning war-protest activities within Israel. *Combatants For Peace* is another organization that puts pressure on the government and military and is one of the groups that explicitly includes both Israeli and Palestinian members. "We have decided to put down our guns and fight for peace," reads the *Combatants for Peace* website.[135] All of these secondary organizations contributed to the public perception of a massive military protest movement by consolidating their voices and engaging so many different segments of society.

D. Diminishing Role of the Military Reserves

It is clear that both the evasion of service and the acceptance of such civil disobedience been on a steady incline since First Lebanon War. Stuart notes an erosion in the stigma that was once attached to not enlisting.[136] In conjunction with this came an attitude shift regarding the importance of reserve duty. Since the 1980s, reserve training has been regarded with more leniency than ever before, with men terminating their

reserve duty at an earlier age than legally called for, and women not reporting for reserve training in the first place.[137] The group *War Resistors International* explains that although reserve service was traditionally considered a very important aspect of Israel's defense policy, this has changed in the past fifty years. Men over 35 are not considered to be in prime physical condition, and in many cases have stopped being called to serve in reserves. They are usually discharged completely between 41 and 45. "Women are as a rule not called up for reserve training at all," says a report from this group.[138]An article by *Draft NOtices*, the newsletter of the *Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft*, estimated in 2002 that only a third of men eligible for reserve duty are actually completing it.

The loose enforcement of Israel's reserve policy reflects both the efforts of the refuser movement to make service conditional and a general relegation of individual commitment to the military. The reserve soldiers had a crucial role in starting the refuser movement and often succeeded in using their service to bargain over the conditions in which they would serve.[139] Other soldiers no longer felt the necessity of reporting to the reserves for more egoistic motivations, no longer relying on their role in the military to elevate their place in society.

This decline in the importance of reserve duty when combined with the magnitude of regular evasion poses a critical threat to military strength. The relegation of reserve service further attests to the decline in the stature of the military as a central institution in Israeli society.

E. Ever-prevailing Attraction to Combat Service

Under the traditional values of Israeli self-sacrifice for the betterment of the country, serving in combat was the highest act of dedication one could muster. A soldier's motivation to serve in a combat unit despite the imminent danger it exposes the soldier to reflects the basic human desire to excel. Combat motivation can be likened with the United States university system, in which college is seen as a crucial stage of development, and even those who are not sure what they want to do with their lives still strive to be accepted by the best universities. In one of Lieblich's interviews, a former soldier named David expresses his attraction to the role of combat: "I am the eldest boy in the family, and so I had no first hand information about the army. But I knew that wanted to be a combat soldier, and would do well in the army – for myself, not because others expected me to. It is a feeling you grow up with. Maybe it had to do with the fact that my uncle had been killed in the War of Independence. Somehow it all seemed related."

Although there is an indisputable decline in the rates of service among the general population, it appears the motivation to join combat units for those who do serve in the military is rising steadily. This can best be explained by the polarization of Israeli society, with the groups that gained preferred military status in the late 1980s committed to the military discourse in which they flourished over the last 30 years, while the broader Israeli populace retreated from military involvement.

In 2008, *Yedioth Ahronoth* reported that a staggering 48 percent of Israeli teens were not enlisting, while at the same time 80 percent of boys who serve were satisfied with their service and 70.3 percent were motivated to serve in combat. Another article from this newspaper about the 2009 conscription trends reiterated that despite only one in

four eligible teenagers enlisting in the army, the number of those seeking combat service was the highest it had been over the past decade. [140]A *Haaretz* article from 2009 reported the same trend, saying the IDF has seen a "sharp increase" in recruits who desire placement in combat units. The article reported that infantry units are the most desired within combat service and that 45 percent of recruits want to serve in one of the five regular service infantry brigades, with the Golani being long-standing most sought after brigade because of the social esteem associated with Golani's impressive performances in past wars and operations. *Haaretz* indicated that 71.5 percent of new recruits specified wanting to join a field unit – a four percent increase from 2008's figures – and that 98 percent of soldiers recruited to these field units requested combat roles within them.

The slight decline reported for the "less glamorous field units coincides with the fact that overall enthusiasm for serving in the military was lackluster, and that only the leftover allure of being a combat soldier from the Israel's developmental period was still tempting recruits.[141]

Another *Haaretz* article written four months later reported that the number of eligible recruits seeking combat service had risen another two percent and was now at 73.7 percent of all conscripts, 67.2 percent the year before. Infantry, the most mainstream combat role, remained highly desired, with seven recruits now competing for every spot in the Golani Brigade. The units considered "glamorous" also saw increases in requests for service, like the Armored Corps, the Artillery Corps, Field Intelligence, and the Air Force's anti-aircraft division.[142]

An interesting manifestation of the combination between growing liberal discourse, which encourages the individual to seek what is personally best for them, and

the unyielding attraction to combat is that Israeli soldiers have gained more control over their personal paths within the army. Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel confirm that the bargaining clout of the soldier over the military career has increased.[143] In one interview, Kfir, an ex-soldier from Petah Tiqva, illustrates this in a story about Yakir Segev, his sister's commander. The man had only one arm and was dismissed from serving altogether, but he insisted upon joining in a combat unit. When the army denied his request, the soldier stole the weapons from two Golani soldiers at a bus station just to prove he could take them away. When a Golani commander heard this story the one-armed soldier was admitted to the unit. He broke a physical record for rope climbing and went on to become a big commander for the elite reconnaissance unit *Egoz.* Kfir shared a similar story, having been given a low profile but maneuvering his way into a combat position nonetheless.[144] In a twenty-first century ridden with military evasion, the presence of a separate Israeli population of those who used their newly attained rights of self-interest to bolster their success in the military is an notable phenomenon.

Despite the spread of liberal discourse, for those who still retain that involvement in the military is part of their civic duty, a desire to serve in combat will always be the primary way to display support of the military. The allure of being in uniform has not disappeared completely. Kfir, like many Israelis, considers what is left of the social prestige of military service today a beautiful thing. "When you're on the streets in uniform, I love this feeling of how everyone looks at you differently. I went to the market and wanted to buy something and when I asked how much the guy said 50 shekels. I said to him I will give you ten shekels. He looked at me, and he looked at my uniform, and he

said five shekels," Kfir boasted.[145] As long as a portion of Israeli society retains traditional Zionist values, combat service will always have a loyal following.

IV. Impact of Economic Development and Globalization

A. Economic Liberalization and the Peace Process

Israel's official narrative until the drastic political and economic changes in the 1970s was based on collective sacrifice and devotion to one's country often to the detriment to one's sense of self. (See section: Psychological Ramifications of War on the Individual in a Military Oriented Model). From the mid-1970s onward, Israel began forging ties with other world powers through economic agreements and a tenable peace process that provided a viable substitute for the costly investment in military action. This period saw a decline in the military-industrial complex that had given the military strong control over the business sector, a decline in the military's portion of Gross National Product, and a continuing trend toward globalization, all of which helped redefine the social code that previously had no use for material desires and self-gratification. With economic horizons broadening, alternative paths to success emerged, beyond rising through the ranks in the military. The liberalization and globalization of the Israeli economy greatly fueled the decentralization of the military's clout.[146] Levy confirmed, "The ethos of the market economy eroded the army's role in defining the social hierarchy. The value of one's contribution to the state through military service was no longer necessarily the criterion that would determine the distribution of social goods and justify the social domination of a particular group." Individual achievement was the new criterion.[147]

The Israeli economy experienced crisis periods in the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. Israel's susceptibility for economic liberalization was a result of its desire to stabilize after these periods of hardship. According to sociologist Gershon Shafir and

political scientist Yoav Peled, Israel's social and economic integration into the world began in the 1970s. Israel signed a Free Trade Agreement with the European Economic Community in May 1975[148] and one with the United States in 1985, the first country to hold agreements with both world powers.[149] According to Shafir and Peled, Israel had always been dependent on foreign capital, since the expansion of Jewish settlement in Israel even prior to the official establishment of the State.

The implementation of the 1985 Emergency Economic Stabilization Plan by Shimon Peres served a role similar to the signing of trade agreements in that it prepared the Israeli economy to open to the world. The plan also set out to reduce state intervention and stabilize inflation.

Fostering economic ties with world powers ushered in Westernization and globalization that spread rapidly throughout the economic sector, as well as other areas of society. Likewise, an emphasis on economic matters served to deemphasize militarism and security issues by encouraging along the peace process and creating an alternative for defining success, which had been focused primarily on military achievement. The business community, especially in the 1990s, avidly backed Israeli peace efforts because regional instability from the Arab-Israeli conflict was an obstacle to foreign investment, as well as to other economic opportunities such as the tourism industry. Peace was needed to maintain a stable civilian economy, and thus the politicization of the Israeli economy did not favor continued militarization. Political moderation and economic policy began to link, according to Shafir and Peled.

Once Israel opened its economic borders, some of Israel's main industries, like the military industrial complex (MIC), could not compete with larger economies and

suffered at the hand of economic liberalization. In the late 1960s Israel became one of the world's foremost arms exporters and the MIC occupied a central place in Israel's economy during the 1970s and 1980s. This was, according to Shafir and Peled, "but another aspect of the militarization of Israeli society: the linking of the livelihood of a significant portion of the civilian labor force – 25 percent of the industrial labor force in the peak year of 1982/83 – to the needs of the military." The MIC in the early 1980s was considered so central to Israeli economics that it was evoked with the image of a monster swallowing its owner, but when this military-economic rapport was reversed in the late 1980s, so too suffered the military's cachet.

In 1989 the military-industrial market was greatly impacted when Yitzhak Rabin, minister of defense at the time, cancelled the production of Lavie fighter planes. Having entered the world market of weapons and technology exporting, Israel recognized that it could no longer "play in the big league of major weapons systems producers…The driving force of military industrialization seemed spent."[150] The cancellation of this project was a symbol of the IDF's economic reign within society beginning to crumble.

Another way to measure the eroded status of the military is by tracing the percent of Israel's gross national product (GNP) allocated to the IDF over the past 50 years. This figure, according to Shafir and Peled, has fluctuated widely in accordance with the level of conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Until 1967 about 10 percent of the GNP was designated for the military's use. Between 1967 and 1973 this rose to about 20 percent, and in the wake of the 1973 war, the percentage jumped to about 30 percent. This high allocation of funds could not be sustained for long, and it returned to around 20 percent in 1976. The 1980s, the period of significant economic liberalization and the

introduction of a mass protest movement, saw a drastic reduction in the military's allocations. In 1986, the military received around ten percent of Israel's GNP, and in 1991 it had dropped to around a mere 8 percent. Nevertheless, the allotment of GNP to the Israeli military was still three times that of the European community and twice that of the U.S.

In addition the decline in the military's allotted portion of GNP, there have also been very recent attempts to minimize the length of conscription service in order to trim the military budget. These proposals reflect the government's willingness to sacrifice the military's centrality for more liberal values. In 2005, Benjamin Netanyahu, then the Minister of Finance, declared his intention to shorten mandatory service by cutting off six months. This would have saved the government millions of shekels annually and raised the participation in the workforce, showing that the workforce was equal in importance to the military in this new liberal structure of society. [151] This proposal did not make it through the Knesset and was not implemented, but other ministers continue to suggest similar plans.[152]

B. New and Broader Definition of Success

Another development spurred by economic liberalization was a change in the definition of success in the Israeli psyche. Whereas in the past, one's access to social leverage and esteem was linked to one's role in the military, new social criteria like educational and occupational success became equalizers in establishing one's sense of worth. Shafir and Peled corroborate the creation of this new path to prestige, stating that it reflected larger societal transformations.

> The depreciation of the IDF's prestige was the result not only of the changing character of its tasks, but also of the changing nature of Israeli society. The children of the pioneering groups, aided by their secure access to citizenship rights, were quick to take advantage of new occupational opportunities, as alternative sources of prestige emerged. Among those still seeking to serve in elite units, the allure of republican virtue has declined to be replaced, in part, by individualistic or ethno-nationalist and religious motivations.[153]

Job interviews no longer began with the question "what army unit did you serve in?" but now began with a more individualized approach tailored to one's educational and professional experiences.[154] These new paths to success devalued ones combat service by making it a less essential gauge of one's talent. Also, it became harder for someone who did devote him/herself to military combat to reach the same level of professional qualification as someone who had not been combat. David, a graduated soldier from the elite commando unit *Maglan,* expressed his dissatisfaction with this new system and noting how it impedes the success of the combat soldier. He said that serving in an office-style job in the army can help one's civilian career, while serving in a combat unit can hurt one's future.

> This is the most frustrating thing for me. I have studied computers all my life and now work in computer programming. I wanted to serve in a combat unit. When I got out of the army, I was offered some security jobs, guarding consulates, or at the airport, like being out of the army but not being out of the army, having to obey the same discipline and maintain the same alertness. The soldiers that came out of the computer units companies jumped at because experience is more important than a degree. Now I want to do the same thing, but nobody wants to hire me because I have neither experience nor a degree. I have to start from zero, and I will miss another three years to study, putting me six years behind the *jobniks*. (Those who serve in offices) You serve your country, but then you get nothing. You come out *tabula rasa*[155], like a blank slate.[156]

David feels that, these days, those who make lesser contributions to the military come out ahead in their progress in life. He is disgruntled, not having felt like he did something tremendous for his country, nor for himself. He senses that even his commanders and

officers no longer feel the values of dedication and nationalism that they try to teach. To David, those who still believe in the military as a central Israeli institution do so out of ego more than nationalism. He's torn between the strong attachment he has to the military mentality and the realization that in the new liberal model of society, the military cannot offer him what he seeks.

The process that David felt taking over Israeli society was brought about by national economic events, such as the stagnation of the economy, the transformation of U.S. military aid from loans to grants that eased the domestic obligation to the IDF, and the peace accord signed with Egypt that popularized the perception that military defense was less necessary and that political negotiations would pick up where the military was now left out. Such military restraints fell in line both with short-term economic crisis management and long-term goals of economic liberalization.[157]

Guy Grossman and Rami Kaplan apply a political-economic approach to explain how liberal economics encouraged military dissent and a critical view of Israel's Zionist project. They argue that, at its inception, Israel's centralized economy and non-pluralistic culture allowed for the "subjugation of the individual to the realization of ever-demanding collective ends." The integration of globalization into Israeli society and the gradual reduction in existential threat allowed for individualization. Grossman and Kaplan agree that, "the result has been the dawn of individualistic values and norms, the progression of political and cultural pluralism, and, accordingly, the cultivation of revisionist literature that offers a critical account of the Zionist project and the Israeli – Palestinian conflict." They describe a subsequent apprehension toward personal sacrifice and the erosion of social cohesiveness that reduced the military's prestige and citizens'

willingness to serve. This led to the displacing of esteem that had been associated with the Israeli military hero since the nation's inception. Grossman and Kaplan attest, "The image of the successful businessman has recently replaced the courageous combat soldier as the subject of idealization and adoration."[158]

C. IDF's New Material Incentives for Service

In the past, prestige from one's service carried over into civilian society, providing such intangible rewards as social esteem, job preference, political clout, etc. As military prestige declined, these immeasurable side-effects also waned. In an attempt to revive the appeal of combat service the army is focusing on promoting new tangible incentives – like pay raises and scholarships for combat graduates. Ironically, in enticing new recruits through material compensation, the IDF is feeding into the very materialist liberal discourse that is a catalyst for plummeting military morale in the first place. By using remuneration to bait soldiers, the IDF undermines its traditional tenet that military service is an honor to country and self, a national obligation, "for which no pecuniary return was either sought or given."[159] With this approach, the military is reinforcing the framework in which an individual's personal gain comes before his/her national patriotism.[160]

Political scientist Stuart Cohen views this as a recent trend, stating that up until the mid-1980s the ethos of nationalism through security still compelled soldiers to enthusiastically serve.[161] Political scientist Reuven Gal describes the "occupational" rather than "institutional" relationship that soldiers began to have with the IDF towards the end of the 1980s. Levy, Lomsky-Feder, and Harel use the terms "obligatory

militarism" to "contractual militarism" to describe this same shift.[162]Soldiers considered their time spent in the military as just a portion of their individual development that prepared them for their next endeavors. Gal notes that the vast majority did not adopt this self-serving attitude, but this period may just have been a time for the planting of the liberal seed, which has since continued to grow.[163]

One critique of the IDF's response to the diminishing desire to serve is that the IDF did not catch sight of this invasive liberal trend and its consequences soon enough. "Not until the mid-1990s did the IDF itself show any inclination to grasp these particular nettles. By then, however matters had assumed a momentum of their own," said Cohen of the changing attitude toward service.[164]

While such IDF incentives were successful in attracting recruits, it is hard to tell whether they will repair damaged military prestige. The IDF, however, is not completely unhappy with the new attitude of a soldier who draws upon both nationalist ideology and an individual sense of success.[165] When one soldier says, "We are not cut off from society. We reflect it," he appears reminiscent of a recent time when he did not feel it was possible to partake in both the ideology of IDF and that of modern society, but that the IDF's embrace of individualism has grown. The IDF further welcomed this trend because it views it as inevitable. "This is the direction. Nothing can be done about it. The army sees itself as a profession and this demands this sort of attitude towards it and this kind of training. This is what we are heading for," said commander Brigade General Zvika Gendelman.[166]

The first of these compensations to be introduced was the *maanak shichrur*, or releasing bonus, introduced in the mid-1990s. When soldiers complete their military

service, they receive a bonus to compensate them for their time and risk. Combat soldiers receive a proportionally higher sum, almost twice as much as non-combat soldiers.[167] All soldiers also receive a *pikadon* savings scholarship to be used for higher education or entrepreneurial ventures.[168] Over the years, several IDF Chiefs of Staff have suggested that reservists should also receive compensations like these, in addition to tax rebates.[169]

The IDF also helps to award *IMPACT!* scholarships, a well-known financial award established in 2002 for combat soldiers finishing their service, sponsored by *Friends of the IDF*. Its goal is to give combat soldiers with disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds the chance to pursue higher education. High-ranking IDF officers are involved in the selection process of recipients, along with Israeli professors and businessmen.[170] Every *IMPACT!* Scholar is required to volunteer 130 hours a year with different charities.[171] In just the two years between 2007 and 2009, the number of scholarships awarded nearly doubled, demonstrating the increasing desire to compensate combat soldiers for their dedication. As of 2009, 2,500 scholarships have been awarded.[172] During a visit to a high school in January 2010, Major-General Avi Zamir, head of the IDF Personnel Directorate, asserted that the military must do more to aid soldiers who complete their service, especially for the 20,000 combat soldiers and their particularly grueling commitment to the military.[173]

Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi echoed this desire to reward every combat soldier at the 2009 award ceremony for the *IMPACT! scholarships*. He said that it was important to society to cultivate combat service as a "fitting norm" and announced that, "The goal is that every combat soldier that finishes the military service will receive a student scholarship."[174] The IDF has for many years discussed

enacting a plan similar to the 1944 GI Bill of the United States Army that would offer free tuition and college credit at colleges and occupational training centers to combat soldiers. Such a plan has not yet progressed.[175]

An interesting plan as of January 2010 is the IDF's new initiative to allocate land plots to discharged combat soldiers. Each recipient would get a quarter of a dunam, 250 square meters, worth between 100,000 to 150,000 New Israeli Shekels, about 27,000 to 40,500 dollars. This initiative, which is currently being debated, addresses the desire of the government to have people settle in the Galilee, Negev desert, and Jordan valley, where the land is offered, and the desire of the IDF to increase the tangible benefits of elite military service.[176]

V. Government Initiatives to Enhance IDF Recruitment and Prestige

A. Accepting the Reality of a Motivation Crisis

The military, in addition to battling the rampant occurrence of draft dodging, also has to cope to with natural attrition rates. A July 2008 *Yedioth Ahronoth* article announced that, "It now appears that this year's draft may encounter the smallest age group set for military service in 20 years." In addition to a motivation crisis amongst recruits, the article associated the peak decline of 12% in IDF recruitment rates since 2004 with two key factors: relatively low birthrates and a decrease in the immigrants of draft age moving to Israel.[177] Upon realizing the extent to which the military was losing both its prevalence in Israeli society and its manpower, the IDF began in the mid-1990s to concentrate on ways to reverse this by engaging the communities that were becoming most disconnected. The first initiative the army took to try to heal its wounded stature was to crack down on the draft dodgers that were unlawfully (women claiming to be religious) and lawfully (Ultra-orthodox excused by law) evading their national obligation and to invite these groups into the military culture. Next the IDF focused on the group it was most afraid to lose, high school students. And last, the IDF tightened its grip on the modern-religious population, which contributes greatly to the IDF's top ranks but was challenging the conformity the IDF was hoping to reinforce. All of the above served to reinforce the military's pervasiveness and power to draft.

B. She Drives on the Sabbath, but Swears She's Religious: Cracking Down on the Exemptions of Non-religious Women

One of the most widespread forms of evasion is the fraudulent misrepresentation of women recruits claiming to be religious. This phenomenon was the main challenge the IDF faced in 2008, and it is a trend expected to grow in the coming years, according to *Yedioth Ahronoth*.[178] One year later, the same author again reported that the majority of able females evading the draft claimed 'religious modesty' as grounds for discharge and that the IDF anticipated 8% of those claims were false, as determined by the IDF Manpower Department.[179] One attempt to stem this process involved hiring private investigators to track the behavior of these girls on weekends in order to ascertain whether they observe the Sabbath and kosher dietary restrictions.[180]

In November 2009 the Knesset Law Committee passed a bill aiming to curb the growing number of secular girls falsifying their religiosity to avoid serving. The bill, proposed by the Defense Ministry, advised close surveillance for all recruits who cite religion as an excuse for exemption. This is in direct contrast to the IDF's policy previous to this, which advocated legal action against suspected individuals and resolving the matter by court decision. The new bill allows the IDF to make its own judgments, without the prior approval of a court.[181]

In making the criteria for exemption more stringent, the new bill requires female recruits to declare which religious educational institution they were enrolled at for at least two of the three years prior to their request for exemption and to provide an official certificate from the school to support their claim.

Arutz Sheva newspaper illustrated the success of the IDF's investigations thus far, writing that in a November 2009 crack down, 80 young women were apprehended for false declarations of religiosity. IDF sources declared that in the one-year period prior to

the November 2009, 570 women were recalled to the draft board and were redrafted after admitting to false claims of religious observance. The deliberate scrutiny into such evasion tactics affirms the government's concern over this matter and the seriousness of the offense in eroding a firmly entrenched social value. These efforts are deemed to be successful and are planned to continue.

C. Making Combat Kosher: Successful Enlistment of Israel's Most Religious

Another population the IDF has targeted for increased participation in the military is the ultra-religious *Haredi* community, which abstained from serving in the military for various religious, gender and education-related reasons. *Haredi* leaders disapproved of allowing vulnerable teenage men to intermingle with female soldiers, fearing it would distract them from their religious paths. However, the main concern of *Haredim* for serving in the military is the detrimental effect on the "intellectual development of budding Torah scholars," according to *The Jerusalem Post.*[182]

Much of the debate surrounding the *Haredi* community's service in the IDF has been centered around the *Tal Law*, a bill implemented first in 2002, which intended to clear the haze surrounding the obligation of the *Haredi* to serve. Since Israel's founding, it has been observed that any male who studies Torah at a recognized academy until the age of 40 will be excused from obligatory military service. This rule effectively removes the *Haredi* from both the military and the work force, as many *Haredi* remained in religious learning institutions, while relying on government welfare to sustain their families.

In 2007, the percentage of *Haredi* men participating in the workforce fluctuated

between 30 and 37 percent, according to a study conducted by *Bank of Israel* economist Daniel Gottlieb and according to the *Van Leer Center*.[183]Almost half the *Haredi* population lives below the poverty line. With the most rapid population growth among any Israeli community, including the fast growing Israeli-Arab community, Israel anticipates mounting pressure on the government to provide for the *Haredi* community, as well as an enlarged recruitment crisis for the IDF as more eligible draftees become religiously exempt. Statistics from the *Jewish Daily Forward* illustrate the growing conscript crisis of this population segment. When the religious exemption was first approved in 1948, the statute covered barely 400 men. Four decades later, in 1992, exemption based on Torah-study was granted to five percent of all the draft able 18-year-olds. In 2007, the proportion of exempted yeshiva students reached 11 percent.[184] This number is predicted to continue to increase and is projected to reach 23 percent by the time the current first grader *Haredi* children reach army age in 2019. [185]

Religious exemptions in the 2007 drafts will comprise about half of all the exemptions granted, with the rest divided evenly among those Israelis living abroad, those with criminal records, medical deferments and those found psychologically unfit. These non-religious exemptions have declined over the years, relative to the influx in religious-exemptions primarily due to fertility. *Haredi* women average 7.6 children each, roughly three times that of the average Israeli woman, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. The Ministry of Education corroborates the expected increase in birthrate, showing enrollment figures for Israel's three separate Jewish school systems as follows: the state-secular elementary schools dropped from 67 percent of Israel's enrollment in 1992 to 55 percent in 2007, to an expected rate of 51 percent in 2012. The

Haredi elementary schools, however, have risen from 12.4 percent of Israel's enrollment to 26.7 percent in the same time frame, and are projected to reach 31 percent in 2012. Modern Orthodox schools, whose graduates play a vital role in military service, have remained steady at roughly 18 percent.[186]

The Tal committee first convened in August 1999 with the intentions of finding better ways to integrate the *Haredi* community into the IDF, though many critics found the committee's rulings ineffective. The law went into effect August 2002 for a five-year trial period. It expired in 2007 and was extended by the Knesset for another five years.[187] It designates that yeshiva students may choose to postpone their draft at the age of 18 until the age of 22. It also enables them to take one year off from their studies, during which they can acquire a profession or work without being drafted, as was previously the standard. At the end of that year they must choose to either remain in the working world or return to their full-time religious studies. If they prefer to enter the work force, then before doing so they must complete either an abbreviated service in the IDF or a longer period of national service with a civilian organization.[188] The time period for active service in the army is based on a criterion involving the man's marital status.[189] Critics are unfavorable to this rule, because as Major General Elazar Stern, who has been planning an alternative to the *Tal Law* after the army announced its disappointment with the legislation in 2003, mentions that *Haredi* men are very likely to be married by 22, to have children, and to be accustomed to living off the state, lessening their period of service and giving them little incentive to select it in the first place. Stern's alternative eliminates the choice to postpone service until 22 and coerces the ultra-religious community to choose between military, workforce, or religious study at 18.[190]

The one-and-a-half year period of national civilian service also has its flaws. The civil service work that is done almost exclusively contributes to the *Haredi* community, and few participants venture outside of the *Haredi* circle.

In conjunction with *Tal Law*, the IDF has created several specialized *Haredi* army units in order to ease and encourage the enlistment of the ultra-religious. These units are part of the *Netzah Yehuda* battalion of the *Kfir Brigade*. It was first introduced eleven years ago as a single unit and has now expanded to an entire battalion. "The first glatt kosher *Sayeret* (elite reconnaissance squad),"[191] is shielded from contact with female soldiers and allots time in its schedule for Torah study and prayer.

The *Tal Law* has been harshly criticized both for the structural design of the law and the very loose enforcement that has accompanied it. Then-chief justice Aharon Barak was quoted as being unsure whether the failure was rooted in a "genetic defect" or "the state's failures to provide the proper implementation tools."[192] In recent years, however, since the renewal of the *Tal Law*, a stricter implementation of the law has produced favorable results.

Prior to the law's renewal, analysis of the *Tal Law*'s success was not fully completely positive. According to a January 2007 *Haaretz* article, between 2002 and 2005, only 1,400 yeshiva students, or 3 percent, took a year off from their studies, and only 74 yeshiva students chose to participate in their national service.[193] A similar *Haaretz* article from May 2007 made the same assessment of the *Tal Law*'s gradual effectiveness, saying that in the first four-plus years since it was passed in 2002, only 353 ultra-Orthodox youths joined the army, although there were about 50,000 draft-age students in *Haredi* yeshivas at the time.[194]

In May 2008, *Haaretz* reported that about 2,500 young ultra-Orthodox men had enlisted in the *Netzah Yehuda* battalion to date.[195] In 2008 alone, 300-400 yeshiva students began their military/civil service. This number, according to data gathered by *Hiddush,* a project pushing for religious pluralism, rose sharply, and in 2009 alone, 2,000 *Haredim* enlisted for their military or civil national service, two-and-a-half times higher than just one year before and five times higher than two years before.[196] 1,000 of those who served did so in the form of national service. The National Service Administration reported in 2009 that 1,070 *Haredi* men opted to do their national service, although most served exclusively with *Haredi* charity organizations.[197] More than 800 *Haredim* were drafted into the IDF, participating primarily in the special *Haredi* tracks like those mentioned above. These figures amount to one in every 100 *Haredi* males signing up for either military or civil national service. An August 2009 *Jerusalem Post* article called the enlistment rates to the *Netzah Yehuda* Battalion "unprecedented" and said that the unit was instructed not to enlist any more non-combat soldiers, as it already had enough, demonstrating the success of the unit in recruiting *Haredi* soldiers.[198]

Another program recently introduced by the IDF, the *Shahar* program, or *sheirut Haredim*, meaning *Haredi* service, targets married *Haredi* men for non-combat supportive roles in the army such as computer programming, technicians, and mechanics. A *Haaretz* article from January 2010 said, "National service is approaching the threshold of legitimacy in the [*Haredi*] community, and the taboo against military service is breaking down as well."[199]

While some are optimistic about the progress of the *Haredi* contribution to the country, other calculations show a graver reality, with the positive *Haredi* developments

appearing relatively small. The number of ultra-Orthodox who serve equals just one third of those who are exempted annually. Those serving are just 3.5 percent of the 55,000 yeshiva students who indefinitely deferred their service. As *Haaretz* said, "Though progress is being made, it remains just a drop in the sea of draft evasion."

Another criticism of the growth of the *Haredi* brigade is that a significant portion of its soldiers do not actually come from the *Haredi* backgrounds the brigade was created to accommodate. Some infer that the brigade is filled with people from "quasi-*Haredi* backgrounds" and modern orthodox Jews who have no hesitance to serve but "prefer the stricter religious milieu of the *Haredi* units."[200] A *Jerusalem Post* article from November 2007 estimates that about 30 percent of those who enlist in the *Nahal Haredi* come from non-*Haredi*, yet Zionist and religious backgrounds.[201]

Overall, these units have received mixed reviews, with some looking at the relatively low proportions of *Haredi* participating as soldiers compared to the eligible *Haredim* population, while others laud the unit for its clear combat success and the high matriculation of *Haredi* military graduates into self-sufficient professional careers. Nevertheless, the progress is undeniable. The current results of the *Tal Law* would have been inconceivable one decade ago. According to one analyst, "It is very possible that this data marks the breaking of the *Haredi* taboo surrounding military or national service."[202] This can be seen in the work being done by *Nahal Haredi* soldiers to make army service mainstream amongst yeshiva dropouts. They have done so by plastering flyers all throughout their communities asking those onlookers that are "young yeshiva students not currently enrolled in a Torah institute" if they want to "earn a respectable salary" or if they have "thought about [their] future." These soldiers also leaked the

names of the sons of prominent rabbis and leaders in the community who are currently serving, hoping to garner a sense of respect and acceptance for their service.

Despite past views that serving in the military was a "fringe phenomenon" for those "in danger of leaving the religious fold," most of the *Haredim* that serve do so in combat positions and are enthusiastic about their contribution, using a religious framework much like that of modern orthodox Zionist backbone of the military, to view their service as a good deed. *The Jerusalem Post* reported, "Both internal and external pressures are now pushing *Haredi* youths to consider military service more seriously."[203]

The IDF's initiative to employ the *Haredi* population had a positive outcome in several ways. Because of the combat success of the *Nahal Haredi* Battalion, the unit was relocated from the Jordan valley to the high-risk area of Jenin, demonstrating the IDF's trust in their capabilities. This move came as recognition after the unit placed first in a target practice and marksmanship competition among IDF combat units.[204] The growing numbers of volunteers have prompted the planning of a second *Haredi* battalion, according to the IDF human resources department.[205] According to Rabbi Tzvi Klebanow, director of the *Nahal Haredi Foundation*, the plan is to develop a brigade incrementally by adding one battalion at a time.[206]

The *Nahal Haredi* has turned to an outside group in order to grow the headcount necessary to form a brigade. Ironically, just as the IDF invested its energy in bolstering the *Nahal Haredi* to avert dwindling recruitment and engage a large but peripheral group, now the *Nahal Haredi* is using similar tactics by engaging a third party – potential recruits from abroad. In 2007, the *Nahal Haredi* launched an advertising campaign in Jewish newspapers in the United States and Europe, hoping to attract a new contingent of

prospective soldiers, united by common bonds of religiosity. This move was supported by Major General Stern of the Manpower Division of the IDF. The battalion soon grew to 100 soldiers from abroad.[207]

A further example of the *Haredi* contribution to building military morale is the initiative by 100 *Nahal Haredi* infantrymen who requested that they be called for reserve duty.[208] And still further, the matriculation of *Haredi* soldier graduates into professional careers and higher education is a testament to the IDF's success in preparing these soldiers for more productive civilian lives. A survey conducted by the *Nahal Haredi Foundation* involving nearly half the 1,000 graduates of the *Netzah Yehuda* infantry battalion found that 11 were unemployed, 18 had returned to their yeshiva studies, and the great majority, 437, had entered the workforce in a variety of professional fields.[209] As aptly state by Member of Knesset Haim Amsalem, "If a young man does not see his future in the yeshiva world, he has an obligation to go out and work, and the only way he can do that is by completing army service. That's the reality." That is the reality, albeit a new one, which reinforces the military's ability to assert its influence over society, despite the makings of a motivation crisis.[210]

D. Teaching the Lessons of Militarism: The IDF Aligns with High Schools

One way to grow an army, the IDF determined, is to zero in on the prospective soldier population at the source, to focus on high school recruits. In an attempt to increase military motivation among high schoolers, the army, in conjunction with the Education Ministry and local school councils, revamped their entire approach. Previously, alumni soldiers would return to their schools to talk about their army experience, organized by

the each unit separately and not an overarching plan of the IDF.[211] Today instead, the IDF takes these teenagers into the field to give them a taste of the army, visiting battle sites and observing military exercises.[212] In addition, IDF officers have begun directing their efforts at teachers, sending almost 300 IDF officers to speak with teachers in November 2009. In these meetings they instructed the teachers to increase student eagerness to serve in the army, with emphasis on combat units. In January 2010, the number of IDF officers visiting schools rose to 350, showing a satisfaction with and increased effort of this program[213] Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar, when presenting the program's model to the Knesset Education Committee, said that it was one of his central personal aims to increase the numbers of youths drafted and that, "The link between the educational system and the IDF will become closer as part of the project I have initiated."[214]

To rally students toward a path of not evading conscription and joining combat units, the IDF developed an initiative, in the 2010, known as "Path of Values." Approximately 8,000 teachers and senior IDF officers will meet to discuss such topics as the relationship between the army and society, the learning of values, and the best methods for bolstering military participation. Last year, a similar effort was addressed to high school principals, who were invited to participate in a conference in Jerusalem. Part of this new initiative involves recognizing best practices from schools where conscription rates are particularly high and publishing comparative statistics of conscription rates. Two more liberal areas not known for high rates of combat conscription which will be documented for comparison are Haifa and Petah Tiqva.[215]

As the IDF's initiatives to reengage high schoolers have just recently begun, it is hard to determine whether they are having an impact. The backlash to these initiatives

demonstrates the voice of opposition that has grown within society, which no longer necessitates the breeding of militarism and puts the value of an unbiased education and development of the individual above the perceived security needs of the state. Many education professionals saw the involvement of schools in military recruitment as a severe blurring of the boundary between liberal education and the military's personal aims. Hagit Gur-Ziv, an academic lecturer at the Seminar Hakibbutzim Teachers College in Tel Aviv, said that, "Without even mentioning the militaristic assumption behind [such actions] – it assumes that a school needs to educate toward the draft and combat service. A proper education system would, at least, raise these issues for discussion."[216]

There was specific objection to the publication of statistics of the matriculation rates of graduates into combat units by high schools. A *Haaretz* article from August 2009 criticized the *Yedioth Ahronoth* for publishing a four-page spread, entitled "The combat-ready and draft-dodging test," which included the poll's finding. Author Gideon Levy took the opportunity to raise awareness about actual educational issues within Israel society and to be the voice of reason for ceasing this military imposition on civil society.

> Sde Eliyahu's school and the Hispin yeshiva high school are at the top of the heap in a country where combat is tops…In most other countries around the world, including not-so-enlightened ones, schools compete with one another over educational and intellectual achievements of their graduates as well as their future success in society. In Israel, success is measured by combat service.
>
> While Israel disgracefully lags behind in every international educational ranking, it encourages and takes pride in the military service of its students as a questionable substitute.[217]

Levy exposes Israel's sub-par performance in international education ranking systems. Israel placed 24th in math and 25th in science out of 49 countries in the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science* study, trailing behind Armenia, Cyprus, and

Malaysia. In the *Program for International Student Assessment* exam, administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Israel placed 39th in science and 40th in reading and mathematics out of 57 nations.[218]

Levy caustically applauds the regions that topped the high school-combat poll, exclaiming the feat of the Jezreel Valley for sending eight graduates to the elite *Sayeret Matkal*. He claims that the schools lower on these ranks should be better known for the creative minds they generate and suggests that there are alternative ways to contribute to society that should not be measured by a focus on military values.

What these statistics effectively highlight, however, is the polarization of military values within Israeli society. It is clear that more urban areas produce fewer combat soldiers. Levy tells Tel Aviv not to feel guilty for its low placement on the "combat service yardstick," this demonstrating the growing phenomenon of socio-geographical stratification of military devotion within Israeli society.[219]

Levy takes one extreme, saying, "By now, Israel should have long outgrown its birth pangs. It should have woken up from the days in which IDF service was perhaps the most important indicator. Those days are gone. Serving in the army has absolutely no connection to the inculcation of values or higher education."[220] This fear, however, has been echoed since earlier times. One of Amia Lieblich's interviews from Spring 1977 voices similar concerns. The interview is with a female named Ronny, born in Israel and raised in France, who returned to Israel on her own at the age of 18. She is both a teacher and a psychology student, like all of Lieblich's interviewees. Ronny attributes a lack of creativity and general narrow-mindedness she perceived amongst her students to the war, as well as other national traumas, like anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, which determine

the psychological makeup of the people, as she says. She says war reinforces this structure, providing legitimacy for the no-alternatives discourse: "'It's not good but we have no choice."…People pick one way – war – with the belief that there's 'no choice.' " Ronny understands this logic during wartime when there's "no time for questioning' but questions why between wars no one tries to remedy "the basically sick condition we're in," and finds the consequences of this on child development tragic. "The way we perceive the world, and ourselves within it, is being shaped to become narrower and more constricted. The range of permissible ideas has become so limited that most of the wealth of expression existing within people is gradually pushed aside, repressed." Ronny continued that she felt this conformity was deeply rooted in society and reinforced by the schools. She described the patterns she witnessed as, "Very strong conformity. Very clear rules as to what is right and wrong. Lack of tolerance of any idea or approach that is outside this limited range. Also the mechanisms of very strong defenses, aggression and fear of anything new that does not fit into this framework."[221] Such observations align with the emergence of liberal endorsement of individualism and the breaking down of the Israeli collective.

The Shunning of Evaders as Pop-Culture Icons

The last way in which the IDF, government, and society attempted to inculcate the precept that evasion was not acceptable was by shunning high-profile evaders and limiting the spectrum of social representation to those who have served. This movement to stop army evaders from representing the country of Israel both nationally and internationally has swept through different facets of pop-culture, affecting singers,

actresses, models, athletes, etc. There have been proposals to turn such standards into law that are still making their way through the Knesset

The Israel Broadcasting Authority announced in November 2007 that the contest to decide who would represent Israel in the *Eurovision* song contest would have a default winner, so as not to let contenders who had not served in the military have the chance to win. The contest took place as part of the fifth season of *Kokhav Nolad*, or Star is Born, the Israeli version of *American Idol*. Israeli Broadcasting Association Director Mordechai Shklar adamantly said of his decision to pre-select the winner that the law is not a selective thing, insisting, "I will not let those who shirked their military service represent us. That's like asking me to applaud someone who uses a legal loophole to evade taxes."[222] Similarly, one member of Knesset drafted a bill to stop public funds from paying artists who perform on Israel's Independence Day concerts who have not completed their military service.[223] This bill passed its first round in the Knesset, with a vote of 46 in favor and 24 against. Debate surrounding the bill questions whether artistic talent should be suppressed for the sake of traditional values. The IDF fears the lack of shame that these famous artists feel for not having served and the detrimental effect that spreading this ideology will have on future service rates. The artists themselves are mostly against the bill and say that "scare tactics" and "sanctions" against cultural leaders will only create more antagonism toward the army in certain celebrity circles. A similar proposal has been mentioned to outlaw evaders from becoming Israel diplomats.[224]

One of the most famous cases of a celebrity's status upset by having not served in the military is that of international model Bar Refaeli. Refaeli's major deal with a popular Israeli fashion chain was almost rescinded after consumers threatened to boycott the store

if Refaeli became the face of the company. A group called the Forum for the Promotion of Equal Share in the Burden was a large part of this opposition. Refaeli arranged to employ her celebrity on behalf of the IDF, visiting hospitalized soldiers every time she returns to Israel in exchange for having shirked her routine service.[225]

The IDF has also used the media spotlight to air a campaign in 2008 called "A True Israeli Does Not Evade." The commercial they produced, which aired on the mainstream TV channels, appealed to the desire of Israeli youth to fit in. It showed a group of young Israelis traveling together outside of Israel, part of the traditional post-army travels that soldiers take when released from the military in order to unwind and readjust to civilian life. They go around the group sharing where they each served, as one person sits uncomfortably silent with nothing to share. An alternative commercial was produced by a several evaders, entitled "A True Israel Doesn't Evade the Truth" in which the youth mutually complain that the army did not care about them and the one who is silent is the only one in the group who has served. This advertising face-off demonstrates the intensifying clash between the two ideologies and the entering of this dichotomy into public debate.[226]

Many paths have been taken by the IDF and its proponents in government to admonish the growing trend of evasion, and results have shown that thus far closer supervision of exemptions have yielded positive results. . Since most of these initiatives are very recent, the long-term effects on evasion rates have yet to be apparent, the initiatives can measure small amounts success so far, like the monitoring of women's religious exemptions and the building of successful *Haredi* combat units. Some

movements incur more backlash then others, like the alliance between education systems and IDF officers, as well as the limitations set on the artistic world. There is so far an indiscernible gray area as to whether IDF initiatives, like material compensation and the limitations of representation, can re-instill old Zionist and military values or whether the only way to stay socially central is for the IDF to join the momentum of Israel's modernization, as they appear to have done in many ways.

Conclusion

This study shows that Israel's military development can be divided into two periods. The first three decades after the birth of Israel in 1948 represent a period of nation building and fortification. The back-to-back large-scale wars fought every decade with intermittent conflict created the perception that it was the responsibility – and honor – of every Israeli to defend his or her country. Israel's fragile existence and the "routinization"[227] of conflict in Israeli life led to a dominant military culture that became entrenched in the very conception of what it meant to be an Israeli.

The second period of Israel's history from 1982 on is marked by social, political, and economic upheaval in which much of the earlier belief system unraveled. Economic liberalization and globalization instilled material values that challenged the previous requisite for self-sacrifice. Peace initiatives offered a non-combative alternative for preserving the nation. The refusal movement, in popularizing the notion of not serving, legitimated the curiosity of Israelis to pursue their own paths to success, no longer determined through one's heroic nationalism as during Israel's infancy, but more reflective of the globalization of opportunity and self-interest.

Shifts that occurred in the social composition of the military eventually resulted in the deterioration of the IDF as an equally representational Israeli institution. The secular Ashkenazi founders of the military deserted the IDF to pursue new economic and professional routes for self-realization, and the upper ranks were filled first by the Zionist

kibbutzniks who had not joined the liberal social movement and then by the modern religious yeshiva graduates. The military to the rest of Israeli society while still viewed as a path for social mobility and achievement was now perceived as a contractual commitment, in which incentives, not honor and obligation alone, compelled Israelis to continue serving. Military values have become a partition, where neither consent nor dissent with regard to militarism and peace spread evenly throughout Israeli society.[228]

The IDF is no longer invincible in war, and combat service in and of itself no longer ensures success. Combat service for some has even come to be seen as detrimental within the new framework of success, wasting one's time on something that will no longer qualify them for civilian opportunities. Yet the increase in desire to serve in combat units even as enlistment rates altogether decline reflects the continuous perception of combat as something prestigious. This confirms that even when support for the military as a central institution wanes, individuals still maintain a military-oriented hierarchy for determining values. Combat remains highly esteemed even when the military does not because of this deep internalization of military values.

While the liberalization of Israeli society may be part of the natural progression of a developing nation, whether the new ideology can co-exist with the old is yet to be determined. The polarization of military commitment, currently relegated to the modern religious segment of Israeli society, shows that the IDF is losing in the struggle to revive its vitality. As the IDF embraces modernization, offering greater material incentive for

service, it deepens its departure from the world in which it used to operate based on prestige and collective contribution.

This is but the beginning a transformation within Israeli society, giving rise to an inevitable clash of ideologies. Those who advocate liberal reform are part of a growing minority that is still relatively marginal in Israeli society. The majority of Israelis, who have not actively embraced protest of Israel's "militaristic metacode" continue to harbor an attachment to militarism inherited from previous generations.[229] The question that remains is how the average Israeli will choose to internalize the growing dichotomy of thought between liberal and traditional values, which values he or she will adopt and which he or she will sacrifice. Each framework is vying to win over Israeli hearts and minds as Israel stands at a crossroads. First, Israeli society at large must consciously acknowledge the transformation that it is undergoing. After actualizing this phenomenon, the extent to which either of these value systems prevails will depend on how ardently the followers of each discourse pass their values from generation to generation in the upcoming years.

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2000s – Second Intifada, Second Lebanon War, Operation Cast Lead
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